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THE OFFICIAL MARVEL® NEWS MAGAZINE!

MARVEL AGE™

LOOKS AT EPIC® COMICS' STARSTRUCK!

PLUS! PREVIEWS OF *THE CONAN HANDBOOK* AND THE *RAVEN BANNER GRAPHIC NOVEL!*

Stan Lee presents

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EDITORIAL by Jim Salicrup

Here's a letter I received recently.

Dear **Jim**,

In issue #23 of **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE**, you invited comments from readers who believe that there are better ways to convey the excitement you feel about the Marvel line. I'm going to assume the invitation was serious and you really are open-minded on this subject. I believe there are better ways.

First, when you say good things about yourselves, they will be more believable if they do not go too far beyond what most dispassionate observers will agree with. Here are three examples: (1) No one disputes that Marvel's **SECRET WARS** series has been a phenomenal sales success. Many observers with no particular axe to grind, however, have been disappointed with the pacing of the series and its tendency to feature large fight scenes that are innovative only in terms of scale, with even that not always drawn to advantage. You don't have to agree with the criticisms, and even if you do, no one expects you to advertise them, but when you take the position that **SECRET WARS** is setting new standards of excellence and establishing new insights into Marvel's characters, you push beyond legitimate enthusiasm into hype. (2) Marvel publishes or has published a large number of series based on robot toys. Only a couple of these — notably **ROM** — have been anything more than tie-in products for small children. Why not acknowledge that these are aimed at a younger audience — the same folks who buy the toys? How can you draw attention to truly excellent and innovative new series, like **POWER PACK**, if you use equally glowing terms to describe a series like **TRANSFORMERS**? (3) Now that **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE** and DC's Meanwhile column have given their respective versions of the **JLA / AVENGERS** project, I think DC's version hangs together a bit more plausibly than Marvel's. Even if you think Marvel did nothing wrong, what if you had taken the position that mistakes were made all around or at least that Marvel could have acted faster and responded with more precision as part of a cooperative process?

Second, if you would volunteer compliments about notable achievements of your competitors, you would make yourself look good as well. I still remember an issue of **SUB-MARINER**, about a decade ago, when a letter-writer gloated over the demise of DC's **AQUAMAN**. Rather than joining in, the then-editor expressed admiration for the work of **Skeates** and **Aparo** on **AQUAMAN** and regret for the demise of any well-done title. That made me feel better about Marvel than anything they said about their own excellent series. What would happen if Marvel were to volunteer praise for DC's **SWAMP THING**, First's **AMERICAN FLAGG** or Aardvark-Vanaheim's **CEREBUS** — and not only when the creators are about to do work for Marvel? Remember *Miracle on 34th Street*?

Third, Marvel's letter columns lack the substance that they had a decade

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MARVEL AGE™ Vol. 1, No. 26, May, 1985. Published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP, James E. Galton, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Vice-President, Publishing. Milton Schiffman, Vice-President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Published monthly. Copyright© 1985 by Marvel Comics Group, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All rights reserved. Price 35¢ per copy in the U.S. and Canada. Subscription rate $4.00 for 12 issues. Canada and Foreign, $6.00. Printed in the U.S.A. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. MARVEL AGE (including all prominent characters featured in the issue), and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are trademarks of the MARVEL COMICS GROUP. **POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO MARVEL AGE, 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, 10TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Application to mail at second-class postage rates is pending at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.**

MARVEL COMING ATTRACTIONS

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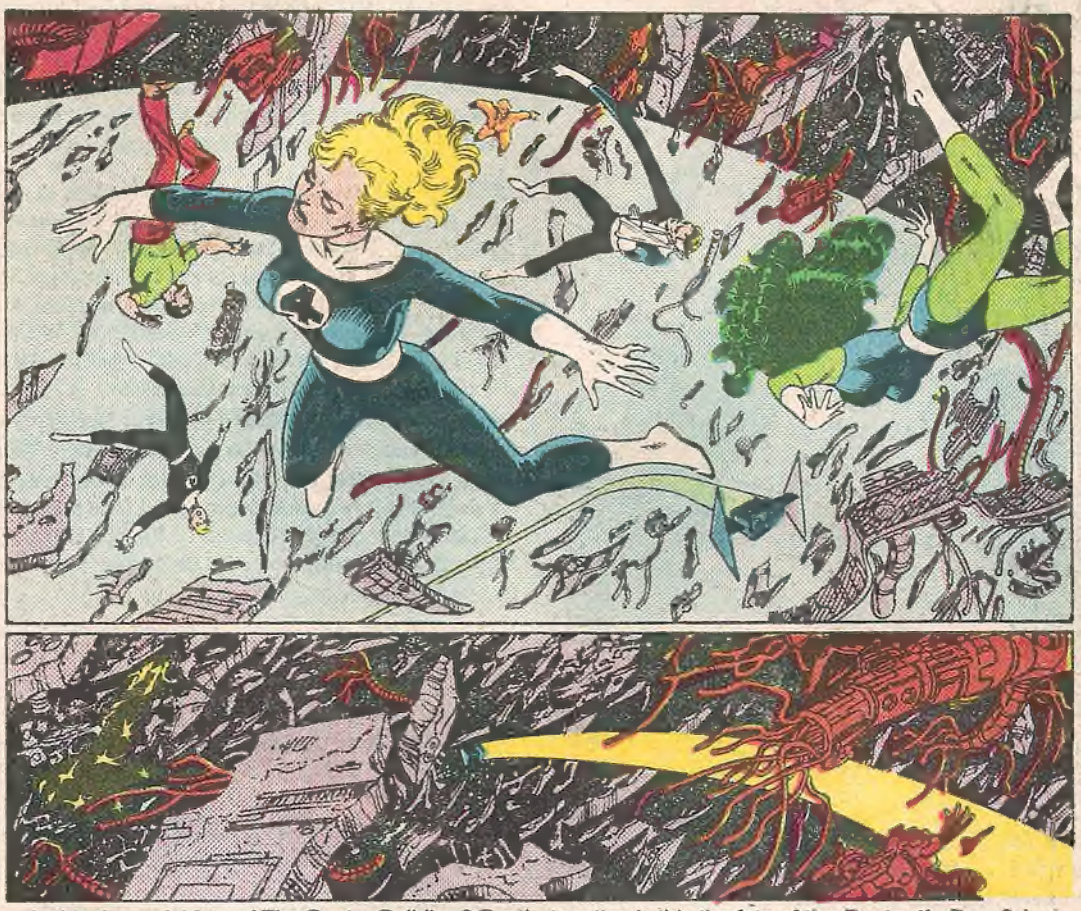
Here is a complete checklist of what's happening in all the Marvel, Epic and Star titles bearing a **June** cover date.

A Limited Series is a title which will only run for a specific number of issues.

A Graphic Novel is a trade paperback-sized edition.

A Direct Sales title is available only at selected outlets.

Shipping Date refers to the date the comics leave the printer.



Is this the awful fate of The Baxter Building? For that matter, is this the fate of **the Fantastic Four**? And what about **Dr. Doom**?

Warning: Be sure to reserve the copies of your favorite titles as soon as possible! Marvel Comics sell out so fast that unless your favorite comics shop owner knows which ones you want, they might be gone before you can get them. And we don't want anyone to run the risk of missing out on what's happening!

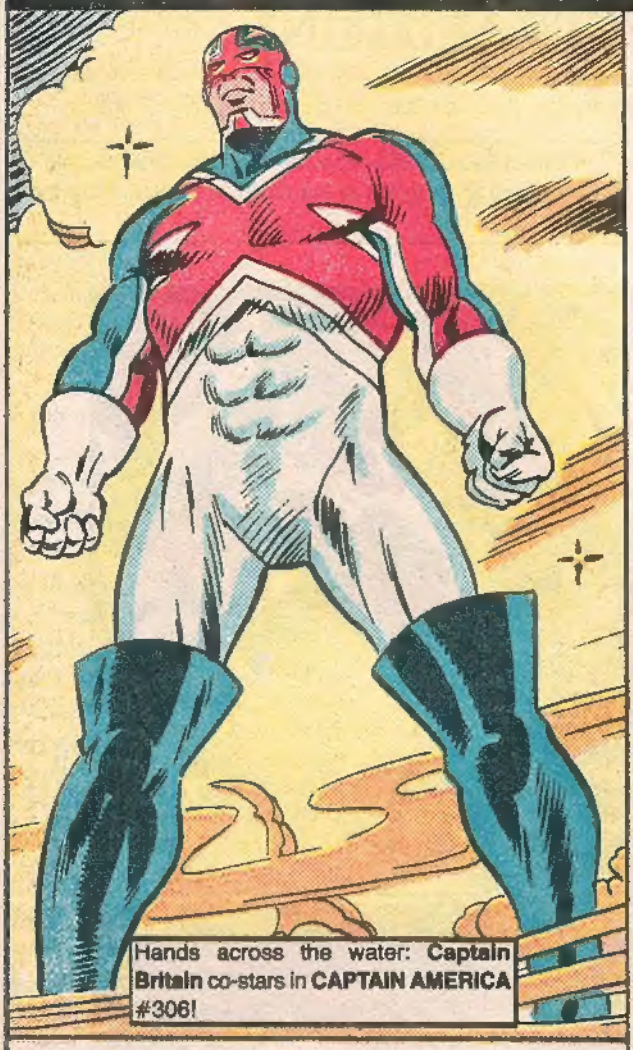
Titles shipping February 5, on sale February 26.

THE THING #24 — Now that he's left **the Fantastic Four** for good, what's **the Thing** to do? Take the bus to Project Pegasus, of course! The bus ride there is anything but pleasant, because not only does **the Thing** lock horns with the rampaging **Rhino** — he must also square off against **the Miracle Man**! "One Man's Prison" written by **Mike Carlin**, penciled by **Ron Wilson** and inked by **Joe Sinnott**. 65¢.

DAREDEVIL #219 — **Frank Miller's** back, writing this special issue of **DAREDEVIL**! **Frank** has teamed up with ace artist **John Buscema** to tell a tale of a crime-ridden town in New Jersey, and the blind man who is its only hope for law and order. Why is **Matt Murdock** fighting **Daredevil's** battles? Check out "Badlands" and see! 65¢.

NEW MUTANTS #28 — It's father against son as **Professor X** battles to save **the New Mutants, Moira, Gabrielle** and himself against the almost unstoppable power of **Legion! Prof. X** knows how to cure his son — but will the cure be worse than the disease? "Soulwar" written by **Chris Claremont**, cover, penciled and inked by **Bill Sienkiewicz**. 65¢.

WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #3 — **The Vulture** has discovered that **the Vulturions** have stolen his costume, power and name! And he busts out of jail to get them back! It's a high-flying tale of theft, mayhem and revenge — with **Spidey** caught in the middle! "Vulture is as Vulture Does!" written by **Louise Simonson**, penciled by **Greg LaRocque** and inked by **Jim Mooney**. 65¢.



Hands across the water: **Captain Britain** co-stars in **CAPTAIN AMERICA** #306!

PLANET TERRY #3 — Everybody loves playing video games with his friends. But nobody wants to play with **the Gamemaster** because when you lose — you *really* lose! **Terry** has no choice! The evil **Gamemaster** has captured **Omnus** and **Robota** and the only way that **Terry** can get them free is to play **the Gamemaster's** unbeatable giant video-game in space! "Space Games" written by **Lennie Herman**, penciled by **Warren Kremer** and inked by **John D'Agostino**. From Star Comics. 65¢.

FRAGGLE ROCK #2 — **Red** believes that she's the #1 Fraggle on the rock. But she finds that there's more trouble than fun in her new role as the top banana in the madcap Muppet rock band! "Number One" written and penciled by **Stan Kay**, inked by **Marie Severin**. From Star Comics. 65¢.

STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE #2 — **Orange Blossom** paints a goblin on the wall. But before anyone has a chance to admire it, the goblin comes to life and begins to eat every strawberry in Strawberry land! "Goblin's Goblin!" is written by **Stan Kay**, penciled by **Howie Post** and inked by **Roberta Edelman**. A Star Comic. 65¢.

GARGOYLE (Limited Series) #1 — The mind of **Isaac Christians** occupies the fearsome form of **the Gargoyle**! What **Isaac** finds to his horror is that the original gargoyle's demonic mind is in control of *his* human body! Now the hell-spawned creature wants its gargoyle-form back — and it offers a prize **Isaac** may not be able to resist — it has brought **Elaine, Isaac's** long-dead love, back to life! If **Isaac** cooperates with the gargoyle's hellish plans, **Elaine** is his again! "Love and Death!" is written by **J. Marc DeMatteis**, and penciled and inked by **Mark Badger**. Printed on high-quality Mando paper. 75¢.

ICEMAN (Limited Series) #4 — **Iceman** is trapped in the soul-destroying realm of **Oblivion**! And it looks like **Oblivion** will keep him in the realm of ultimate nothingness forever in this, the limited series' final — and we mean *final* — chapter! "The Price You Pay" written by **J.M. DeMatteis**, penciled by **Alan Kupperberg**, and inked by **Mike Gustovich**. Printed on high quality Mando paper. 75¢.

SECTAURS #1 — New from the House of Ideas — Marvel goes beyond reality as we know it to bring you an entire *race* of super-beings — **the Sectaurs**! Led by **Dargon**, heir to the throne of the Shining Realm, the heroes of Symbion must fight to save their world from the merciless hordes of **Empress Devora**! "Upheaval!" written by **Bill Mantlo**, penciled by **Mark Texeira** and inked by **Joe DelBeato**. Printed on high quality Mando paper. 75¢.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (Limited Series) #4 — It's **the Beast** against the evil **Mutant Theatre** and **Dazzler** is the helpless prize! Can the love **the Beast** and **Dazzler** share survive? And what of the dread "son of **Dr. Doom**"? For pulse-pounding finishes, this is the one to buy! By **Ann Nocenti, Don Perlin**, and **Kim DeMulder**. Printed on high quality Mando paper. 75¢.

STARSTRUCK #2 — One is a hard-drinking, straight-shooting steel-willed amazon, the second is a loud-mouthed, strong-armed terror of the space-ways and the third is a bartender who mixes a drink so strong it can destroy the galaxy! **Galatia 9, Brucilla** and **Harry Palmer** are all in search of the ultimate pleasure creature — the original **Erotica Ann!** "Conspicuous by Their Absence!" written by **Elaine Lee** and penciled and inked by **Mike Kaluta**. From the Epic line of comics. Direct Sales only. Printed on high quality Baxter paper. $1.50.

Titles shipping **February 12**, on sale **March 5**.

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #265 — The bounty-hunter organization Silver Sable, Inc. always gets their man — *dead* or alive! They've set their sights on the crook called **Fox**, and **Spidey** must do everything he can to save him! "After the Fox!" written by **Tom DeFalco**, penciled by **Ron Frenz**, inked by **Joe Rubinstein**. 65¢.

CAPTAIN AMERICA #306 — How can you stop a mystic who holds the very power of **Merlin** himself? **Captain America** teams up with **Captain Britain** to face the awesome might of **Modred**! London will never be the same in . . . "The Summoning!" written by **Mike Carlin**, penciled by **Paul Neary** and inked by **Dennis Janke**. 65¢.

POWER PACK #11 — Would you willingly enter the New York City sewer system? Neither would **the Power Pack** — and these kids have super powers! But **Gee, Lightspeed, Energizer** and **Mass Master** have no choice — and wait until you find out why! The youngest super heroes in the Marvel Universe find more than they bargained for in "Problems" written by **Louise Simonson**, penciled by **June Brigman** and inked by **Bob Wiacek**. 65¢.

MICRONAUTS #9 — **Devil** returns! The confluence quest reaches its shocking climax! And that's not all! This issue features the beginning of a new threat to Homeworld — one greater than **Baron Karza**! "The Dreaming Star" written by **Peter Gillis**, penciled by **Kelly Jones** and inked by **Bruce Patterson**. 65¢.

ALPHA FLIGHT #23 — The tragedy **Alpha Flight** never dreamed would happen! So soon after the death of their first leader, Canada's greatest super heroes must now face . . . the death of **Sasquatch**! "Night of the Beast" written and penciled by **John Byrne**, and inked by **Bob Wiacek**. 65¢.

WALLY THE WIZARD #3 — **Wally** hasn't heard from his parents for weeks! Just when he thinks they've totally forgotten him, **Wally** discovers that they've been captured by merciless Vikings! How can a mere apprentice wizard defeat a whole shipload of the fiercest warriors in the world? "Folkquest" written, penciled and inked by **Bob Bolling**. From Star Comics. 65¢.

TOP DOG #2 — Everyone in the neighborhood thinks **Top Dog** is a friend — but is the talking dog really a spy for an army that plans to conquer America? "Spies" written by **Lennie Herman**, penciled by **Warren Kremer** and inked by **Jacqueline Roettcher**. From Star Comics. 65¢.

HEATHCLIFF #2 — **Heathcliff** and **Iggy** run into a hair-raising "cat-astrophe" when they embark on the search of fabled pirate's treasure hidden inside a crowded amusement park. "Captain Catt's Treasure" written by **Angelo DeCesare**, penciled by **Warren Kremer** and inked by **Jacqueline Roettcher**. From Star Comics. 65¢.

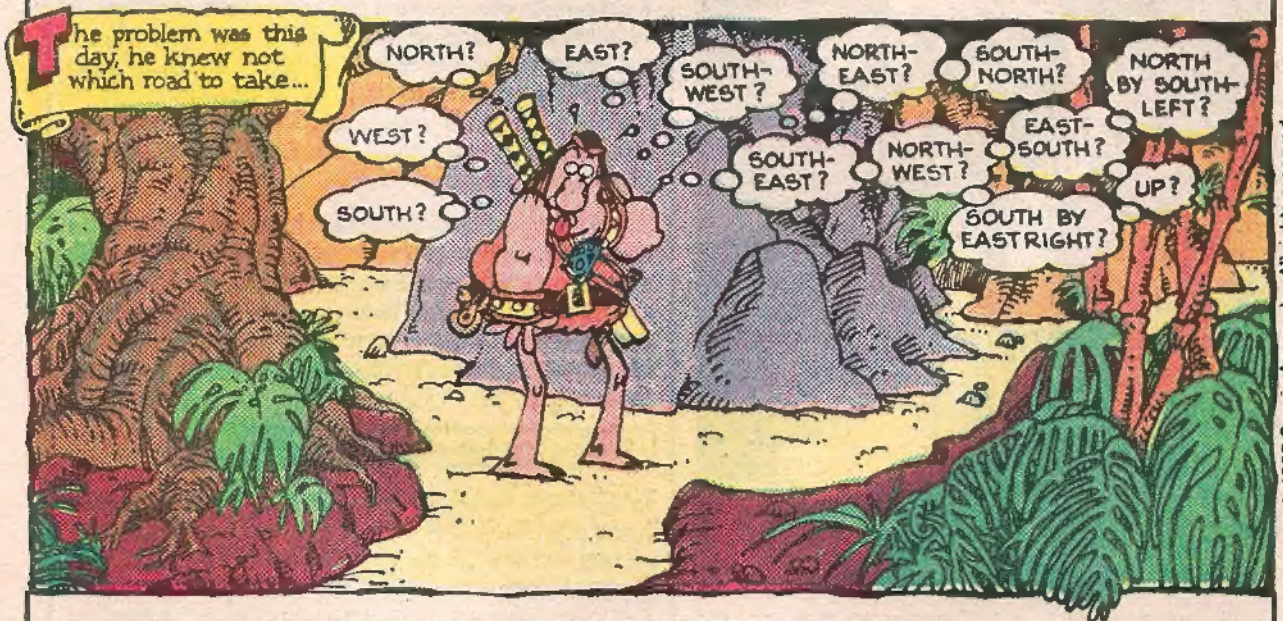
DOCTOR STRANGE #71 — **Dr. Strange** journeys to the Dark Dimension to aid his former disciple **Clea's** rebellion against the unspeakable **Umar**! But if **Umar** should discover **Doc's** presence, all is doomed! **Doc** must disguise his face, his form — his very sorcerous nature! And take it from editor **Carl Potts**, "It's not easy!" "Into the Dark Dimension!" is written by **Roger Stern** with art by **Paul Smith**. 65¢.

DUNE (Limited Series) #3 — The concluding chapter in the Marvel Comics adaptation of the big-budget science-fiction movie! Written by **Ralph Macchio** and penciled, inked and cover painting by **Bill Sienkiewicz**. Printed on high quality Mando paper. 75¢.

GROO THE WANDERER #4 — A mysterious airship is soaring over Grooland kidnapping all the women. Can **Groo** save them? Does **Groo** even notice that they're gone? "A World Without Women" by **Sergio Aragonès**, questionably assisted by **Mark Evanier**. From the Epic line of comics. Printed on high quality Mando paper. 75¢.

SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #112 — Her name is **Zarmi**. And her followers believe she has been blessed by the gods. Her quest is to create a new empire, with her as its queen — and it looks like she's going to succeed! But only one man refuses to fall under her hypnotic spell — **Conan**. Yet what can even Hyborea's greatest barbarian do against **Zarmi's** ever-growing legions? "Dream of Empire" written by **Michael Fleisher**, penciled and inked by **Dave Simons**. A Marvel magazine. $1.50.

SISTERHOOD OF STEEL #3 — A stunning saga of the high-seas as the novice warriors of **the Sisterhood** thirst for a battle that will prove their mettle! But the pirates and slavers they face are determined to make it a massacre of vengeance! "Boronwë" written by **Christy Marx**, penciled and inked by **Mike Vosburg**. From the Epic line of comics. Printed on high quality Baxter paper. Direct Sales only. $1.50.



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A new direction in **GROO THE WANDERER #4**! Check it out!

Titles shipping February 19, on sale March 12.

MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE #27 — The lowdown on the most sensational sequel ever devised — **MARVEL SUPER HEROES SECRET WARS II**! Plus, **Hembeck's Page**, the Coming Attractions, and a host of other enjoyable features! Direct Sales only, and a steal at 35¢.

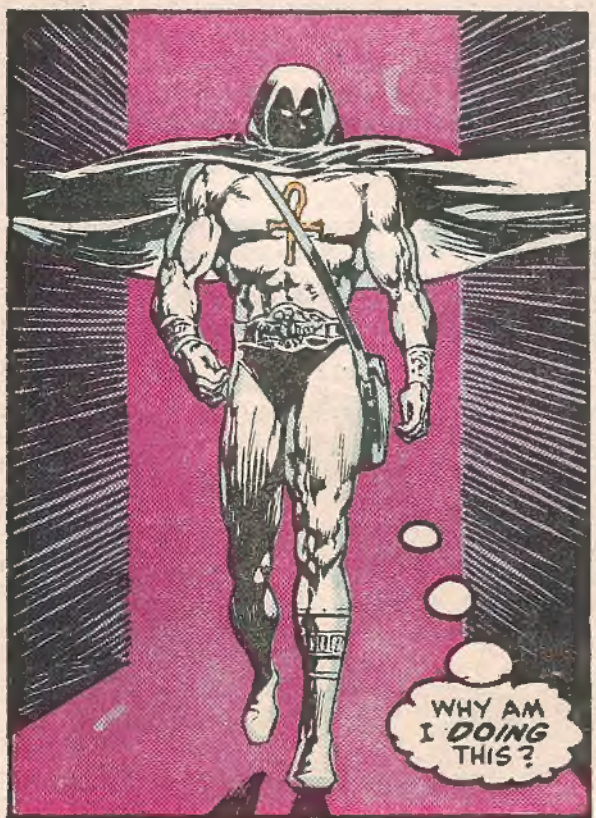
THE INCREDIBLE HULK #308 — Friendship for **the Hulk** is a rare thing — trust even rarer! So when **the Hulk's** only friend in the weird dimension of his exile, **the Puffball Collective**, asks for help, **the Hulk** gives it, heedless of the consequences — even when it includes betrayal! "Here there be . . . Demons!" written by **Bill Mantlo**, penciled by **Sal Buscema** and inked by **Gerry Talaoc**. 65¢.

THE AVENGERS #256 — An innocent shipwreck near Antarctica plunges **the Avengers** into a crisis that could destroy the Savage Land! A shocker from start to finish! "This Power Unleashed!" written by **Roger Stern**, penciled by **John Buscema** and inked by **Tom Palmer**. 65¢.

CONAN #171 — The sinister **Brotherhood of the Falcon** has it in for **Conan** — and this time it looks like they're going to get their revenge! "Barbarian Deathsong" written by **Michael Fleisher**, penciled by **John Buscema** and inked by **Armando Gil**. 65¢.

MARVEL TALES #176 — "Once Upon A Time There Was A Robot" reprinting the shocking saga from **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN** #37, featuring the malevolent **Prof. Stromm**! By **Stan Lee** and **Steve Ditko**. 65¢.

X-MEN #194 — **Nightcrawler's** the new team leader, and boy does he wish he wasn't! There's a new killer robot in town — so new he's from the future! And he's out to slay **the Juggernaut**! Will **the X-Men** help **Nimrod**, the robot, or **the Juggernaut** — or will there even be time to decide? "The Juggernaut's Back In Town!" written by **Chris Claremont**, penciled by **John Romita, Jr.** and inked by **Dan Green**. 65¢.



Good question. **MOON KNIGHT** #1 holds the surprising answer!

ROM #67 — **The Dire Wraiths** are gone, and **Rom** is heading home to Galador at last! Sounds like things are going all right for **the Silver Spaceknight**, right? Nope . . . he's leaving behind the girl he loves — and faces the fact that his humanity is lost forever! How can "Life on Mars" show **Rom** his destiny? Written by **Bill Mantlo**, penciled by **Steve Ditko** and inked by **P. Craig Russell**. 65¢.

MOON KNIGHT #1 — The spectral crime-fighter of the night returns in a new series! This is **Moon Knight** as you've never seen him before — with new problems that make his old troubles look like nothing! Mystery piles upon mystery in "Night of the Jackal," written by **Alan Zelenetz**, penciled by **Chris Warner** and inked by **E.R. Cruz**. 65¢.

KULL THE CONQUEROR #10 — A king's castle is more than a home — it is the final bastion of protection. But that bastion suddenly becomes a trap for **Kull** and everyone inside when his traitorous courtiers unleash a demonic menace "While Valusia Sleeps!" Written by **Alan Zelenetz**, art by **John Buscema**. 65¢.

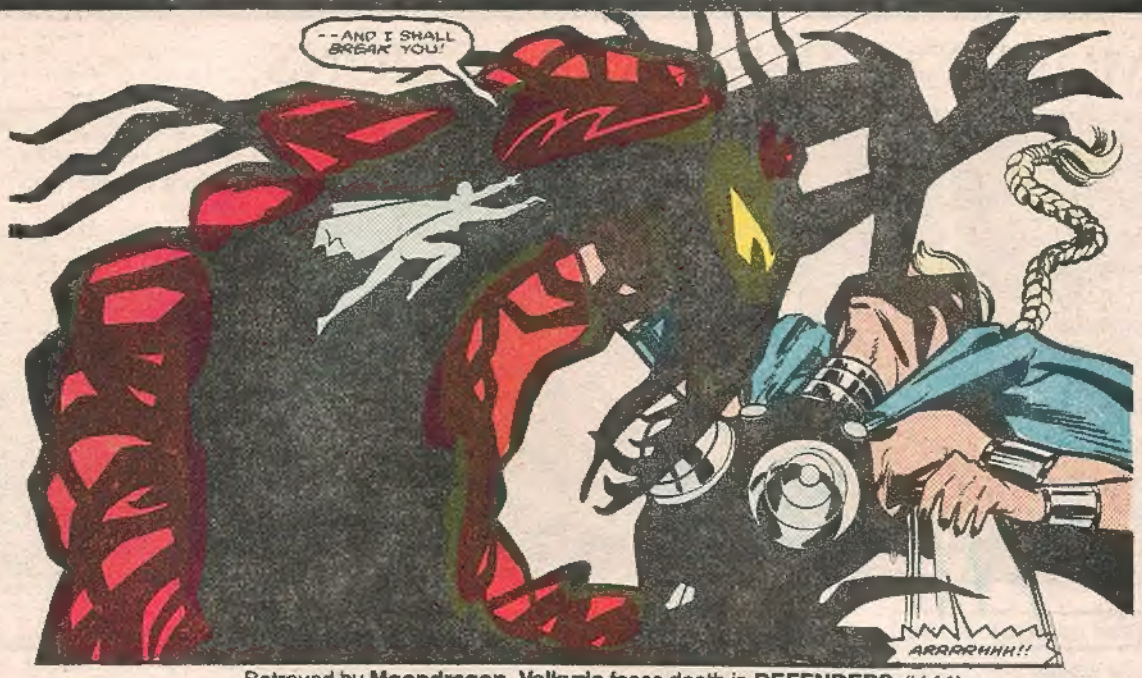
G.I. JOE #36 — The one story you'll never forget! Never before has **Cobra** been so powerful! Never before have **the Joes** been so threatened! And never before have there been more artists begging to be in on the story that reveals **the Joes'** latest and greatest secret weapon! "And All the Ships at Sea!" written by **Larry Hama**, penciled by **Rod Whigham**, **Mark Bright**, and **Bob Camp**, and inked by **Andy Mushynsky** and **Mike Esposito**. Printed on high quality Mando paper. 75¢.

ALIEN LEGION #7 — Talk about trouble! Half of **Nomad Squadron** must make a forced landing on a planet in the most remote section of the Galarchy not knowing how or when they'll be rescued. And on top of it all — here come the dread Harkilon drones! "Planetfall" written by **Alan Zelenetz**, premiering the pencils of **Chris Warner** and introducing the series' new regular inker **Wilce Portacio**! From the Epic line of comics. Printed on high quality Baxter paper. Direct Sales only. $1.50.

DREADSTAR #18 — **Vanth Dreadstar** must confront the most punishing truth of all when he discovers that one of his most trusted friends is a spy for his greatest enemy — **Lord Papal**! "A Traitor Within" written and penciled by **Jim Starlin** and inked by **Sam De La Rosa**. From the Epic line of comics. Printed on high quality Baxter paper. Direct Sales only. $1.50.

Titles shipping February 26, on sale March 19.

FANTASTIC FOUR #279 — The story we thought we'd never print! Trapped in outer space — their air running out — how can **the F.F.** get back to Earth? Plus, a secret of **Doctor Doom** is revealed in this senses-shattering saga that marks the end of an era! "Crack of Doom!" written and penciled by **John Byrne** and inked by **Jerry Ordway**. 65¢.



Betrayed by **Moondragon**, **Valkyrie** faces death in **DEFENDERS** #144!

IRON MAN #195 — **Shaman** of **Alpha Flight** has the cure that **Rhodey** needs to eliminate his mysterious headaches? But is **Rhodey** willing to make the sacrifice that will ensure the cure's success? A shocker! "The Thing Most Precious!" written by **Denny O'Neil**, penciled by **Luke McDonnell** and inked by **Ian Akin** and **Brian Garvey**. 65¢.

PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #103 — **The Rocket Racer** is back — but for how long? Contract killers stalk him through the city — and only **Spider-Man** stands between him and certain death! Will **Spidey** help a former foe? The answer's in "The Last Race," written by **Bill Mantlo**, with art by **Vince Giarrano** and **Pat Redding**. 65¢.

THE NEW DEFENDERS #144 — The evil **Dark Dragon** offered her almost limitless power — and **Moondragon** took it! Now she's a rampaging emissary of evil whose first task is to slay her friends, **the Defenders!** "Dragon Midnight!" written by **Peter B. Gillis**, penciled by **Don Perlin** and inked by **Kim DeMulder**. 65¢.

STAR WARS #96 — There's a new **Dark Lord** in the galaxy, and she's out for **Luke's** head! Not only must **Luke** fight **Lumiya**, he must also deal with who and, more dangerously, *what* she really is! "Duel With A Dark Lady!" written by **Jo Duffy**, penciled by **Cynthia Martin** and inked by **Bob Wiacek**. 65¢.

THOR #356 — It's the re-match of the century! **Thor** versus **Hercules!** Guest-starring **Jarvis** of **the Avengers**, this special issue is by the guest team of writer **Bob Harras**, penciler **Jackson Guice**, and inker **Bob Layton**. 65¢.

THE TRANSFORMERS #5 — The avalanche of mail demanded it, and the Bullpen worked like wildmen to do it! Now it's here — **the Transformers** go monthly! Not only that, to make this a really special event, we've added new characters, new villains and a new creative team! "The New Order!" says it all! Written by **Bob Budiansky**, penciled and inked by **Alan Kupperberg**. Printed on high quality Mando paper. 75¢.

ROCKET RACCOON (Limited Series) #2 — In a madcap world filled with killer clowns, feuding toy lords and friends deadlier than the most fiendish foe, **Rocket Raccoon** must rescue his true love, **Lylla**, from the despicable **Judson Jakes!** But first he must face **The Red Breath!** "Masque of the Red Breath," is by **Bill Mantlo**, **Mike Mignola**, and **Al Gordon**. Printed on high quality Mando paper. 75¢.

SPIDER-MAN INDEX #3 — The definitive compilation of everything you ever wanted to know from **THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN** #'s 59-84. Characters, credits, synopses, color cover reproductions and more! Special bonus: the complete lowdown on the two special **SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN** magazines! Printed on high quality Mando paper. Direct Sales only. $1.25.

DOCTOR WHO #9 — Time's wildest Traveler is up to his multi-colored scarf in trouble in "The Life Bringer!" written by **Steve Moore** and penciled and inked by **Dave Gibbons**. Plus: the invincible **Dalek-Killer** returns in "Star Tigers" written by **Steve Moore** and penciled and inked by **Steve Dillon**. And to top things off, a special article on the **Doctor Who** TV show! Printed on high quality Baxter paper. Direct Sales only. $1.50.

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MORE COMING ATTRACTIONS

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Titles shipping in **March**.

THE THING #25 — by **Carlin, Wilson** and **Sinnott**.
THE NEW MUTANTS #29 — "Meanwhile Back At The Mansion" by **Claremont** and **Sienkiewicz**.
DAREDEVIL #220 — "Fog" by **O'Neil** and **Mazzucchelli**.
WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #4 — by **Fingeroth, LaRocque** and **Mooney**.
PLANET TERRY #4 — "The Monster Of The Cave" by **Herman, Kremer** and **Colletta**.
CLOAK AND DAGGER #2 — "Have You Seen Your Mother, Baby?" by **Mantlo, Leonardi** and **Austin**.
PETER PORKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-HAM #2 — "Buzzards and Bullfrogs" by **Skeates, Armstrong** and **Albelo**.
DREADSTAR AND COMPANY #1 — by **Starlin**.
GARGOYLE #2 — "Burning Bright" by **DeMatteis** and **Badger**.
CONAN THE KING #29 — "The Sleeping Lion" by **Kraar, Silvestri** and **Nichols**.
MOONSHADOW #2 — by **DeMatteis** and **Muth**.
THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #260 — by **David, S. Buscema** and **Rubenstein**.
CAPTAIN AMERICA #307 — "Madcap" by **Gruenwald, Neary** and **Janke**.
POWER PACK #12 — "Underground" by **L. Simonson, Brigman** and **Wiacek**.
MICRONAUTS #10 — "The Wall Around The Universe" by **Gillis, Jones** and **Patterson**.
WALLY THE WIZARD #4 — "Joust Of The Century" by **Brown, Post** and **Colletta**.
THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF INDIANA JONES #30 — "Fireworks!" by **Grant, Villamonte** and **Bulanadi**.
DAZZLER #38 — by **Goodwin** and **Chadwick**.
EWOKS #2 — "Rites of Power" by **Manak, Kremer** and **M. Severin**.
GROO THE WANDERER #5 — "Slavers" by **Aragones** with **Evanier**.
ALPHA FLIGHT #24 — by **Byrne** and **Wiacek**.
SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #113 — "Quest For The Shrine Of Luma" by **Yakata** and **Chan**.
BLACK DRAGON #1 — by **Claremont** and **Bolton**.
MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE #28 — featuring a look at **Goodwin's DAZZLER**.
THE INCREDIBLE HULK #309 — "Quartet" by **Mantlo, S. Buscema** and **Talaoc**.
THE AVENGERS #257 — "Holocaust In A Hidden Land" by **Stern, J. Buscema** and **Palmer**.
CONAN #172 — "Reavers of the Outerland" by **Owsley, J. Buscema** and **Camp**.
MARVEL TALES #177 — by **S. Lee** and **Ditko**.
X-MEN #195 — "It Was A Dark And Stormy Night" by **Claremont, Romita Jr.**, and **Green**.
ROM #68 — "Ad Infinitum" by **Mantlo, Ditko** and **Breeding**.
MOON KNIGHT #2 — by **Zelenetz, Warner** and **Cruz**.
POWER MAN AND IRON FIST #118 — "What's Eating Colleen?" by **Owsley, Bright** and **Acerno**.
ROYAL ROY #2 — "A Strange Stranger" by **Herman, Kremer** and **D'Agostino**.
MUPPET BABIES #2 — by Kay and **M. Severin**.
GET ALONG GANG #2 — "Movie Madness" by **Manak, Garzon** and **Roettcher**.
G.I. JOE #37 — "Twin Brothers" by **Hama, Whigham, Camp, Mushynsky** and **Esposito**.
MARVEL FANFARE #21
FANTASTIC FOUR #280 — "Tell Them All The Love Must Die!" by **Byrne** and **Ordway**.
IRON MAN #196 — by **O'Neil, McDonnell, Akin** and **Garvey**.
PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #104 — by **Mantlo, McDonnell**, and **Breeding**.
THE NEW DEFENDERS #145 — "Five Women" by **Gillis, Perlin** and **Nichols**.
STAR WARS #97 — "Escape" by **Duffy** and **Martin**
THOR #357
TRANSFORMERS #6 — by **Budiansky** and **Kupperberg**.
MARVEL SUPER HEROES SECRET WARS II #1 — by **Shooter, S. Buscema**, and **Leialoha**.
ROCKET RACCOON #3 — "The Book Of Revelations" by **Mantlo, Mignola** and **Gordon**.
SPIDER-MAN INDEX #4 — compiled by **Olshevsky**.
DOCTOR WHO #10 — by **Moore** and **Gibbons**.
SWORDS OF THE SWASHBUCKLERS #2 — by **Mantlo** and **Guice**.
EPIC ILLUSTRATED #30

Titles shipping in **April.**

THE THING #26 — by **Carlin** and **Wilson.**
DAREDEVIL #221 — by **O'Neil** and **Mazzuchelli.**
NEW MUTANTS #30 — by **Claremont** and **Sienkiewicz.**
WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #5 — by **Fingeroth, LaRocque** and **Mooney.**
PLANET TERRY #5 — "The Prisoners Of Subteria" by **Herman, Kremer** and **Colletta.**
FRAGGLE ROCK #3 — by **Kay** and **M. Severin.**
STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE #3
RED SONJA #10 — "Stranger" by **L. Simonson, Wilshire** and **Nichols.**
DREADSTAR AND COMPANY #2 — by **Starlin.**
GARGOYLE #3 — "Lost Souls" by **DeMatteis** and **Badger.**
RAWHIDE KID #1 — by **Mantlo, Trimpe** and **J. Severin.**
SECTAURS #2 — by **Mantlo, Texeira** and **DeBeeto.**
STARSTRUCK #3 — by **E. Lee** and **Kaluta.**
THE LIFE OF CAPTAIN MARVEL #1
THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #267 — by **David** and **McLeod.**
CAPTAIN AMERICA #308 — by **Gruenwald, Neary** and **Janke.**
POWER PACK #13 — "Fireworks" by **L. Simonson, Anderson** and **Wiacek.**
MICRONAUTS #11 — "Failure Of The Heart" by **Gillis, Jones** and **Patterson.**
ALPHA FLIGHT #25 — by **Byrne** and **Wiacek.**
WALLY THE WIZARD #5 — "The Wand And The Stone"
TOP DOG #3 — "The Secret Of Top Dog" by **Herman, Kremer** and **Roettcher.**
HEATHCLIFF #3 — "The Looney London Adventure" by **DeCesare, Kremer** and **Roettcher.**
DOCTOR STRANGE #72 — "Secret Origin" by **Stern** and **Smith.**
GROO THE WANDERER #6 — by **Aragonès** with **Evanier.**
SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #114 — "The Riddle Of The Demuzaar" by **Yakata** and **Nebres.**
BLACK DRAGON #2 — by **Claremont** and **Bolton.**
ALIEN LEGION #8 — by **Zelenetz, Warner** and **Portacio.**
SISTERHOOD OF STEEL #4 — by **Marx** and **Vosburg.**
MARVEL AGE #29 — Previews of **THE WEST COAST AVENGERS, THE VISION AND THE SCARLET WITCH Limited Series,** and the **SILVER SURFER Limited Series.**
THE INCREDIBLE HULK #310 — "Banner Redux" by **Mantlo, Blevins** and **Williamson.**
THE AVENGERS #258 — by **Stern, J. Buscema** and **Palmer.**
CONAN #173 — "Honor Among Thieves" by **Owsley, J. Buscema** and **Camp.**
MARVEL TALES #178 — by **S. Lee** and **Romita.**
X-MEN #196 — by **Claremont, Romita Jr.,** and **Green.**
ROM #69 — "This World Alive" by **Mantlo, Ditko** and **Russell.**
MOON KNIGHT #3 — by **Zelenetz, Warner** and **Cruz.**
G.I. JOE #38 — "Judgement" by **Hama, Whigham** and **Mushynsky.**
DREADSTAR #19 — by **Starlin** and **De La Rosa.**
FANTASTIC FOUR #281 — by **Byrne** and **Ordway.**
IRON MAN #197 — by **O'Neil, Buckler, Akin** and **Garvey.**
PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #105 — by **Mantlo, McDonnell** and **Breeding.**
THE NEW DEFENDERS #146 — "Fun" by **Gillis, Perlin** and **Nichols.**
STAR WARS #98 — "Far, Far Away" by **Duffy** and **Martin.**
THOR #358
TRANSFORMERS #7 — by **Budiansky** and **Johnson.**
ELFQUEST #1 — by **Pini.**
MARVEL SUPER HEROES SECRET WARS II #2 — by **Shooter, S. Buscema** and **Leialoha.**
ROCKET RACCOON #4 — "The Age Of Enlightenment" by **Mantlo, Mignola** and **Gordon.**
SPIDER-MAN INDEX #5 — compiled by **Olshevsky.**
DOCTOR WHO #11
TIME SPIRITS #5

WHEN YOU TOOK ME THERE--TO FIND A CURE FOR MY HEADACHES--YOU DIDN'T TELL ME I COULD NEVER RETURN!
YOU DID NOT ASK!
AND IF I'D KNOWN I'D HAVE TO ABANDON THE AVENGERS--
WAIT!
I SENSE A PRESENCE ON OUR EARTH...FROM THERE, FROM WHERE WE WERE...

A sample of **Rich Buckler's** pencils for **IRON MAN** #197!

EDITORIAL *Continued from inside front cover.*

ago and that some other titles' still have. Letter columns can be given depth in many ways. One is to discuss the topics raised in the stories, as was done so well in **CAPTAIN AMERICA** in the late 1960s and early 1970s or in **Mark Evanier's** work for various companies today. Another is to use short snippets of many different letters woven together with a familial editorial tone, as **Ernie Colon** did for DC. A third is to discuss in depth what is going on with the characters and the plots, as **Dave Sim** does in **CEREBUS**. Too often, Marvel's letter columns consist exclusively of letters of shallow praise — compliments without analysis — and answers that merely accept the praise, make vaguely enticing promises about developments due in future issues, cross-promote other Marvel titles, and fill out space with silly things like the Question of the Month or invitations to draw pictures of an unseen new editor.

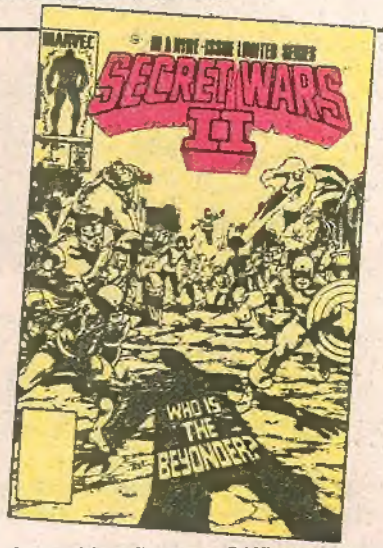
These are three general ideas — tempering enthusiasm with realism, showing magnanimity in recognizing excellence everywhere, and interacting with letter-writers and other readers in a more substantial manner. **Jim**, I'll be interested to see what you do with this letter and other responses to your invitation.

Best wishes
John Hall
351 Engamore Lane, #107
Norwood, MA 02062

Well, first I'm going to say thanks, **John**.

Next, I'm going to make sure that every writer that contributes to **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE** reads your intelligent and well-written letter, so that they'll better understand the goals of this magazine. You summed up a philosophy that both **Jim Shooter** and I share towards Marvel's public image.

This is not to say that I agreed with every point you raised. For example, you fell into the trap of forgetting that all criticism is merely opinion, no matter how widely held. Are you saying that people who think that **SECRET WARS** *is* setting new standards of excellence and establishing new insights into Marvel's characters are wrong? You probably do, judging from your comments. Or you certainly don't agree with them. Either way you're entitled to your opinion, but do you see



the problem it causes? What we consider in this case to be legitimate enthusiasm, you have branded hype. Whose opinion do we go by? The guy who likes **POWER PACK** and **ROM** and not **TRANSFORMERS** or the fan who really enjoys **ROM** and **TRANSFORMERS** but considers **POWER PACK** to be kid stuff because of the characters' ages? Or the critic who feels that any comic book featuring a super hero is automatically worthless? All I know is that every Marvel title is produced by dedicated professionals putting in all they've got to offer to make their work the best it can be. Of course, we don't always succeed, but what's important is that we try. If we had adopted the view that comics about toys should just be tie-in products for small children, we probably never would have produced issues of **ROM** that you enjoyed. As I said in that editorial, we feel it's our obligation to share Marvel's creators' enthusiasm for their work with you in this magazine. To add to that, I feel that Marvel's readers are informed and sophisticated enough to decide for themselves, after reading an article in **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE**, whether or not a new title will interest them.

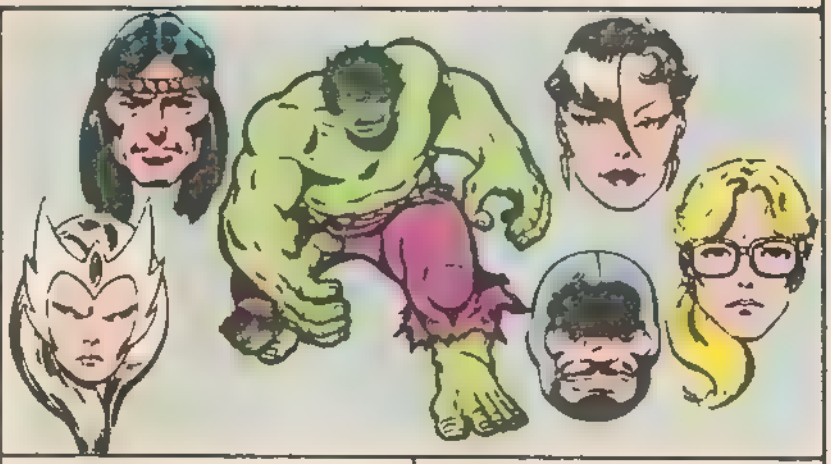
Also, Marvel *is* doing many of the things you suggested. For example, what better endorsement could we give **Dave Sim's CEREBUS** than running the avenging aardvark in full-color in **EPIC ILLUSTRATED**? We don't make a penny from the Aardvark-Vanaheim title and can't think of a better way to promote another publisher's title than publishing its lead character in one of our most prestigious magazines. And, yes, I like **SWAMP THING** and **AMERICAN FLAGG** also. But let's not forget this *is* **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE**. Personally, when I feel like pushing another publisher's title, I find time to do it in **David Anthony Kraft's COMICS INTERVIEW** magazine. **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE** was created because Marvel readers wanted a magazine such as this — to keep them informed about what's coming from Marvel. Unlike a decade ago, there are plenty of magazines devoted to telling you what's happening in all the other publishers' titles. It's like the computer magazine field. There are plenty of general interest computer magazines, but if you're only interested in the computer you own, you're probably apt to buy the magazine that's solely devoted to that computer.

As for the letter columns, again I feel you might be too harsh. I know from putting together the **DOCTOR WHO** letter column that a majority of the letters we receive are full of praise. I've gone out of my way to make the column as interesting as possible by publishing every other type of letter **DOCTOR WHO** has received. It certainly would be a lot easier to print just the praise letters, and *more* representative of the mail that title garners, but I try to make it as interesting as possible. And what's wrong with being silly? Marvel's reputation has always been not to take ourselves too seriously. If enough people complained about the Question of the Month, I'm sure editor **Mark Gruenwald** would quickly remove it. As it stands, it gives **Mark's** letter columns a unique style, and along with his special announcement sections, it provides insight on the behind-the-scenes crews.

In an ideal Marvel Universe there's room for a million different approaches to this subject, and I applaud **Jim Shooter** for allowing his editors such a freehand, rather than enforcing a strict company style. Sure, there's always room for improvement, **John**, and your suggestions are quite good. Your letter gave me a good understanding of your point of view and I hope I've expressed myself as clearly. If nothing else, I hope I've convinced you that the lines of communication will always be open. 'Nuff said?

NEWSWATCH

Lights . camera NEWS!



ITEM! Get ready for a shock! Prepared? Okay, here goes: Starting soon, **John Byrne** will be writing and drawing **THE INCREDIBLE HULK**, and **Bill Mantlo** and **Mike Mignola** become the regular creative team on **ALPHA FLIGHT**! The switch-over will happen in **HULK** #314 and **ALPHA FLIGHT** #29, in a special story that'll bring **the Green Goliath** and **the Northern Stars** together — only when they part, they'll take each other's creative teams with them! All three creative talents are excited about the switch, and are bubbling over with plans for their new books. **John** tells us that he's going to get to the core of **the Hulk**, as he did with **the Fantastic Four**, and tell some really primal stories — bringing out the raw power longtime readers remember from the very early days of the series. Meanwhile, **Bill** and **Mike** promise us a dramatic development that'll bring **Alpha Flight** closer as a team, along with a greater sense of the international nature of the book. Stay tuned to **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE** for more news on this switcheroo as it develops!

ITEM! Welcome back **Rich Buckler** to the hallowed halls of Marveldom! The soft-spoken **Mr. Buckler** has done oodles of work for Marvel in the past, including regular assignments on such titles as **THE FANTASTIC FOUR** and **THE AVENGERS**! Now he's back, to lend his penciling wizardry to two of our books: **PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN**, where he'll be joined by **Peter David**, writer, and **Brett Breeding**, inker, as of #108 — and **IRON MAN**, where writer **Denny O'Neil** and inkers **Ian Akin** and **Brian Garvey** have been regularly working wonders! Hey, and lest you wonder what's up with **Al Milgrom** and **Luke McDonnell**, whom **Rich** is replacing — they're still around! **Al's** penciling our new **WEST COAST AVENGERS** series, and **Luke's** work will be on view in a special three-part **Spidey** story, in **PETER PARKER** #104-106!

ITEM! We get a lot of mail asking what's to become of **MARVEL TALES** when we run out of those fabulous **Spidey** classics by **Stan Lee** and **Steve Ditko** we've been reprinting. Well, rest easy! We're going right on to the *second* great Age of The Spider, namely those wonderful stories by **Stan** and **John Romita Sr.** The first of 'em is **MARVEL TALES** #198, featuring "Unmasked by The Green Goblin" — and you know you don't want to miss that! Hey, and speaking of **Spidey** classics, the second issue of our new **SPIDER-MAN** index series will feature not only a brand new cover by **John Romita Sr.**, but also the never-before-printed **Steve Ditko** cover originally done for **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN** #10! A real historical find!

ITEM! **The Dazzler's** life has been disaster after disaster recently — as seen in **DAZZLER**, the **DAZZLER Graphic Novel**, and the **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Limited Series**! So what happens when she tries to pick up the pieces? Don't ask us, ask **Archie Goodwin** and **Paul Chadwick**! They're the new regular team on **DAZZLER**, kicking off with #38! And considering people are *still* talking about **Archie's** run on **IRON MAN** (from sixteen years ago!) and **STAR WARS**, we can safely predict that the new **DAZZLER** will be a wow! **Paul's** an exciting newcomer whose work is the talk of the office already, and editor **Mike Carlin** has promised us a real surprise on the inking chores! It's someone you'd never expect, and you'll love to see!

ITEM! What could we possibly do to top **SECRET WARS**, the most highly-acclaimed series of the Marvel Age of Comics! Well, how about **SECRET WARS II**? This new nine-issue Limited Series will start coming your way in April, from the creative team of **Jim Shooter**, **Sal Buscema**, and **Steve Leialoha**! Naturally, there was no better choice than **Jim** to write this — who knows more about the characters, the concepts, the ins and outs of the Marvel Universe? And **Sal**, who has drawn nearly every Marvel series at one time or another, was a natural choice to illustrate. His powerful storytelling and years of experience are unsurpassed. **Steve Leialoha** has been recently seen working his magic on the Epic **COYOTE**, **DR. STRANGE**, and **THE X-MEN ANNUAL** — and if you've missed the few times he's teamed up with **Sal** — you're in for a welcome surprise! **SECRET WARS II** will pick up right after the finale to the twelve-issue **SECRET WARS** — with **the Beyonder** deciding that observing human experiences is not enough — he must participate in them himself! So the immensely-powerful being comes to Earth, to taste humanity — and that's what makes **SECRET WARS II** such a comics breakthrough. This time, it's not happening on a distant planet — this time it's going on right in the thick of the Marvel Universe! Each and every issue of **SECRET WARS II** will tie in with at least three other Marvel titles the month it comes out — making the series much larger than its nine issues would seem. For example, #1, on sale in April, will tie in to **NEW MUTANTS** #30, **CAPTAIN AMERICA** #318, **X-MEN** #196, and **IRON MAN** #197! Co-ordinating all the writers and artists involved with **Jim's** mega-epic will be no easy task, but **Bob Budiansky**, the series' editor, is looking forward to the challenge. For the first time ever, all of Marvel's titles will be showcasing one enormous story — a story as big as the Marvel Universe itself!

ITEM! Cut! Print it! That's a wrap!

STARSTRUCK BY STARSTRUCK

by **Sandy Hausler**

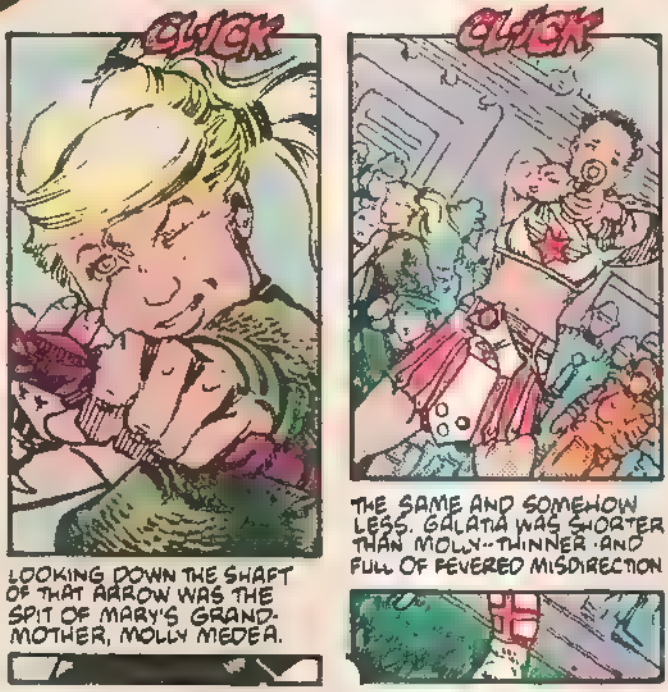
A theatrical extravaganza hit New York in April of 1980. No, it wasn't **A Chorus Line**. Uh-uh, not **Annie**. Wrong again, not **Cats**. It was **Starstruck**, an exciting space opera adventure comedy-drama by **Elaine Lee, Susan Norfleet Lee** and **Dale Place**.

If you didn't see it, don't feel bad. It only ran in an off-off Broadway showcase production for sixteen performances. (Another showcase production was mounted in the spring of 1983.) The enthusiasm generated by those who *did* see it, however, was phenomenal. Now you too can join the adventure and fun, for **STARSTRUCK** is Epic Comics' newest and most ambitious project.

What exactly *is* **STARSTRUCK**? It's every s.f. cliché you've ever seen, turned on its ear. It's sophisticated humor. It's human interest, and it's just plain fun.

The genesis of the project occurred in 1978-79 when **Elaine Lee** and her sister, **Susan Norfleet Lee**, were in an acting class together. They started writing scenes because they couldn't find many good parts for women. A fight scene which **Elaine** wrote for a woman she wanted to work for sparked her creative juices and, before she knew it, she was writing an honest-to-goodness science fiction play. She and a bunch of friends from the acting class had formed their own theater company in New York and were performing their own material. It was during this period that **Starstruck** began to gel.

There is a special reason for art lovers to rejoice. **STARSTRUCK** heralds the return to comics of **Michael Wm. Kaluta**. **Kaluta** was the much-acclaimed artist of DC's **SHADOW** series back in the 1970's and was also the set and costume designer for the **Starstruck** play. **Elaine Lee** will handle the scripting chores, and the two exude boundless enthusiasm for this unique and exciting project.


CLICK
LOOKING DOWN THE SHAFT OF THAT ARROW WAS THE SPIT OF MARY'S GRANDMOTHER, MOLLY MEDEA.
CLICK
THE SAME AND SOMEHOW LESS. GALATIA WAS SHORTER THAN MOLLY--THINNER AND FULL OF FEVERED MISDIRECTION
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Galatia 9 and **Brucilla the Muscle**: The stars of **STARSTRUCK**!

Mike fell into the **Starstruck** crowd quite by accident. He noticed **Elaine** and **Susan** sitting in a restaurant with a bunch of science fiction magazines lying on the table. He went over to introduce himself and by the time the conversation was over, he was anxious to do a **Starstruck** poster. Little did he know just how involved he would get in this theatrical venture.

STARSTRUCK is set in the far future in a time not long after the dissolution of a galactic empire, the Incorporated Elysian Republic, which was ruled by **the Dread Dictator**. It is the Anarchera, a time without government, when people do what they want until other people stop them. There is a major scramble for power. Those with the big bucks can buy planets and consolidate their power base. Chief among the power brokers is the **Bajar** family, the descendants of **the Dread Dictator**. The **Bajars** have dreams of re-establishing themselves as the major power in the galaxy.

On the other hand, there are the good guys. **Galatia 9** is a hard-bitten Amazon who has fought for **the Women's Underground**, been sent to a penal colony, and basically had a lot of hard luck. She is joined by **Brucilla the Muscle**, a sort of female **Buck Rogers** gung-ho type, and oddly enough, the only character in the whole series from Earth (Kansas, to be exact)!.

The idea for a **Starstruck** series

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was a natural outgrowth of the play itself. In the play, the courageous crew of **the Harpy**, led by **Galatia 9**, is determined to save the Free Universe with the help of a holdful of telephone books(?). The villainous **Verloona** is equally determined to stop them. In the course of the play, flashback sequences show us bits and pieces of the background of the major characters. We learn how **Erotica Ann**, a former pleasure droid turned science officer, was owned and nearly destroyed by the evil and sexually hung-up **Kalif Bajar**. We find how the headstrong but weak-willed **Brucilla the Muscle** was drummed out of the Americadian Space Academy. We learn how **Bronwyn** of the Veil chickened out under pressure and was declared a heroine. We find out that **Verloona** is really the sister of . . . no, that would be telling! The series will start off as a prequel to the play, filling in the gaps, but will grow organically. Characters who may seem to be mere window dressing in the early issues may become major characters later on. Important characters may fade into the background for a time. Characters who start out evil may reform and the good guys may put on black hats. The heroes have faults and the villains have virtues. The Starstruck universe is not one of black and whites, but ever-shifting grays.

For instance, **Phillipe Cezare Kalif Alexander Bajar** (**Kalif** for short) is a very complex individual. His father runs a combination corporation and government called **the United Free Trade Planets**, and expects a lot from his only son and heir. **Kalif** resents being pushed all the time, and this resentment has a negative effect on his

RONNIE LEE ELLIS, HOSTESS OF THE BAR-B-Q AT REX'S WAXWORKS, WEARING THE BAJAR CREST--WEARING THE BAJAR FACE
HAVEN'T I SEEN YOU ON TV?
SHE HAD TO BE THE ONE THAT SICCED THOSE GOONS ON ME DID SHE HAVE ANKLE?
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personality. In addition, his father blows the head off the **Erotica Ann** pleasure droid that he loves. **Kalif** isn't able to deal with this and has a breakdown. He still keeps a photo of the headless droid on his desk. Poor **Kalif** is really a victim of his environment.

This is equally true of his twin sister, **Indira Lucrezia Ronnie Lee Ellis Bajar**. While **Kalif** was being pushed by his father, **Ronnie** was totally ignored. Only interested in his male heir, her father had no use for her. In the beginning of the graphic novel, she follows her brother around, shooting him with a peashooter and observing and analyzing his reactions to various stimuli for future reference. It's quite clear that there is more than one schemer in the **Bajar** family.

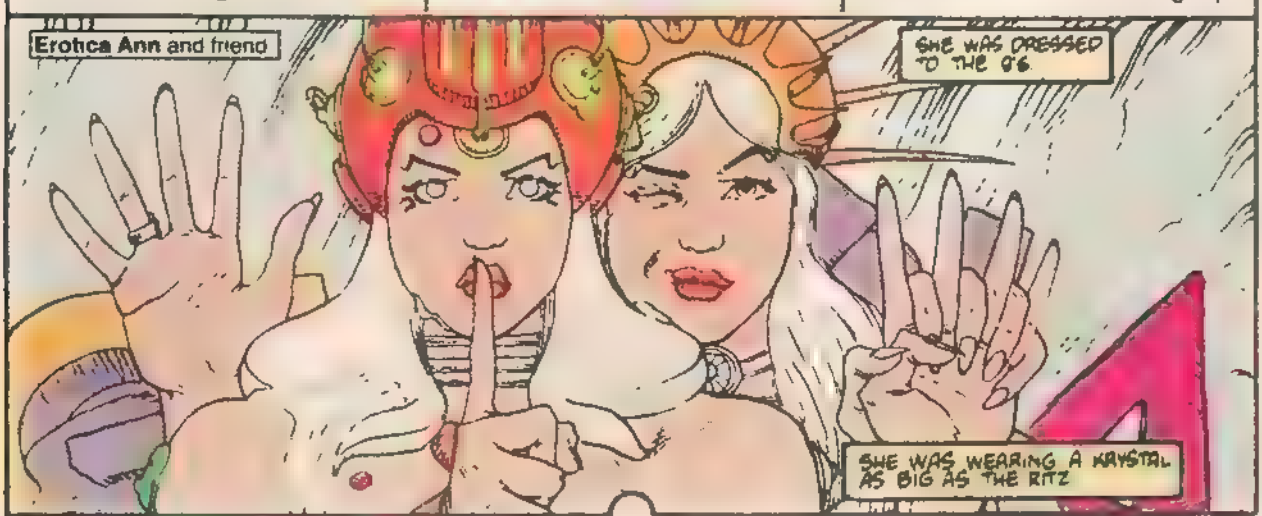
Even "good guys" like **Brucilla** have their faults. She's an obnoxious drunk, a bigot, and tells the most awful droid jokes in the Free Universe.

The real cipher of the cast of **STARSTRUCK** is **Dwannynn of Grilyarr**. He is a character who desperately wants to be a good guy, but is so inept that he just doesn't make it. Eventually, he gets fed up and tries to be a bad guy, but he's a bust at that too. He makes a brief appearance in the graphic novel where he gets stood up by **Brucilla**.

An important part of the **STARSTRUCK** sociology is religion. The major religion portrayed in the series is the Cloistered Order of the Cosmic Veil. The basic tenets of this religion are 1) The Mother is Paradox; Ever Present and Never There when You Need Her, 2) No Participation is the better part of Action, 3) If the Pond is Illusion, then what are the Ripples? 4) All Things come to She who Waits . and Waits . . . and Waits . . . 5) Confuse Karma; Stand quite still and think of Nothing.

One of the more bizarre aspects of the Starstruck mythos is **the Galactic Girl Guides**. In the play, **Elaine**, **Susan** and **Dale** revealed little about this strange group. Starting with the **STARSTRUCK Graphic Novel**, **the Guides** will play a greater role.

As might be inferred by their name, **the Guides** are similar to **the Girl Scouts**. Similar, that is, in that they sell cookies. Other than that the two groups



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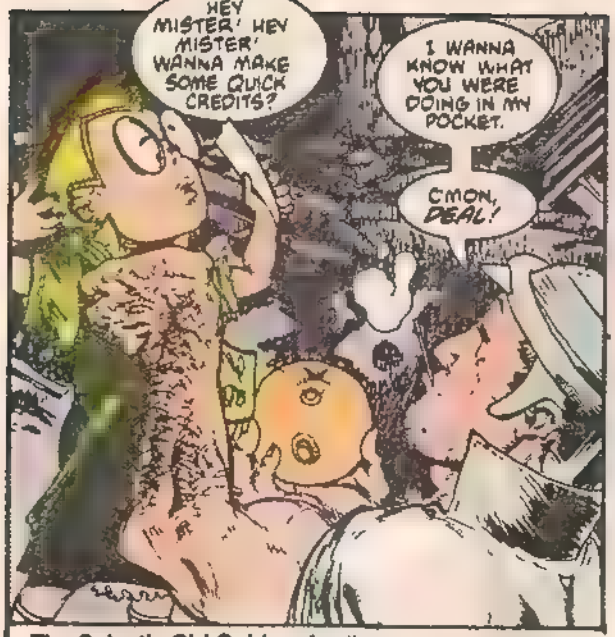

JUST CHECKING YOU OUT WE OVERHEARD YOU GOT FRIENDS IN THE GUTTERS. WE COULD USE A MAN LIKE YOU.
HEY MISTER! HEY MISTER! YOU KNOW "THE MUSCLE"?

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The Galactic Girl Guides: Are they savvy survivors — or a menace to civilized people everywhere?

could not be more different. **The Guides** are a group of children who are raised *sans* parents and taught how to survive in a crazy universe. Their recruiting posters say, "It's a tough galaxy, but someone's got to live in it. It might as well be you." Their motto is "Truth as far as it goes." Basically, **the Guides** take a lot of innocent little girls and train them to become self sufficient little con artists.

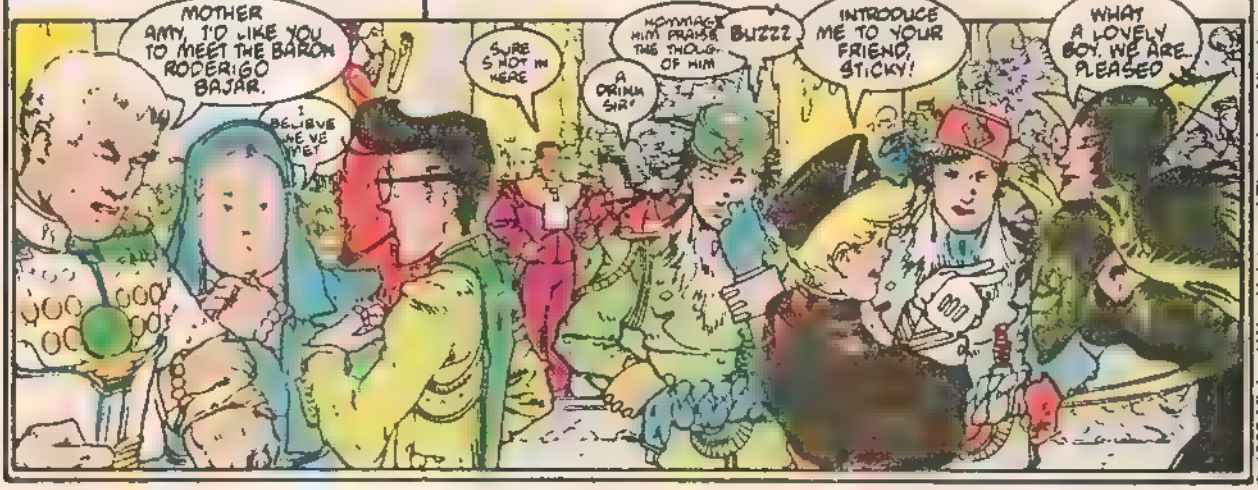
The Guides have a lot of strange merit badges. You can get one for stowing away on a space ship at least 16 parsecs from home without getting caught and returning with money gulled from somebody. Another is the Do-Yo-Stuff badge for escaping punishment after being caught in the act. There's also the Sign of the Nova badge for convincing your **Girl Guide** leader to give you 52 merit badges that you don't deserve. It's a very strange organization

In the graphic novel, **the Guides** get involved in a scam which includes **Galatia 9**, **Brucilla**, and a platinum asteroid. If there's money in it, you can bet your bottom Standard Credit, **the Galactic Girl Guides** will be there.

Mike's work on the graphic novel as well as on the regular series is nothing less than phenomenal. From space battles to bar room scenes, this series represents his most exciting work to date. **STARSTRUCK** represents a major investment of time and effort on **Mike's** part, but he's as happy as can be plugging away on a series in which he fully **believes**. **Elaine** even unchains him from his drawing board on alternate weekends.

Elaine is also thrilled to be doing **STARSTRUCK**. It's a chance to take the characters that she created and give them new life in a different medium. **STARSTRUCK** will allow her creations to do things that they never would have been able to do if they were confined to the stage. The only thing confining her now is her imagination, and, judging from what she's shown us already in the graphic novel, those boundaries are vast. There's plenty of uncharted territory for her and **Mike** to explore and a million stories waiting to be told and **Mike** and **Elaine** are itching to tell as many as possible.

Don't miss this terrific new Epic Comic. The graphic novel is still on sale at your friendly neighborhood comics specialty shop. This book is fated to be the blockbuster of the 80's or any other decade for that matter. Besides, how can you go on living without knowing the answer to that perplexing question . . . Who the heck is **Mr. Greenjeans**?


MOTHER AMY, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET THE BARON RODERIGO BAJAR.
I BELIEVE WE'VE MET
SURE S NOT IN HERE
HOMAGE HIM PRAISE THE THOUGHT OF HIM
A DRINK SIR!
BUZZZ
INTRODUCE ME TO YOUR FRIEND, STICKY!
WHAT A LOVELY BOY. WE ARE PLEASED

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THE OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE CONAN UNIVERSE™

by **Dwight Jon Zimmerman**

"Know, O prince, that between the years when the oceans drank Atlantis and the gleaming cities, and the years of the rise of the sons of Aryas, there was an Age undreamed of, when shining kingdoms lay spread across the world like blue mantles beneath the stars . . . Hither came Conan, the Cimmerian, black-haired, sullen-eyed, sword in hand, a thief, a reaver, a slayer, with gigantic melancholies and gigantic mirth, to tread the jeweled thrones of the Earth under his sandaled feet."

— The Nemedian Chronicles

For decades, these stirring words have been the herald for the greatest barbarian in popular literature, **Conan**! Created by the tall Texan from Cross Plains, **Robert E. Howard**, **Conan** came to life in the pages of popular fiction magazines, called pulps because of the paper on which they were printed, during the great Pulp Era of the 1930's. Now, more than forty years after his creator's death, **Conan** has never been more popular.

The rich tapestry of the Hyborean **Age**, and that of the Atlantis of **King Kull**, **Howard's** other great barbarian, have been one of the many reasons why the stories of these action-and-adventure heroes have been so popular and so enduring. But this wealth of setting, with all the exotic place names, peoples and customs can be confusing to the legions of readers just discovering **Conan** and **King Kull**. After the phenomenal success of **THE OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE**, Editor-in-Chief **Jim Shooter** decided that one should also be done for the Conan Universe as well.

Unlike the multi-volume Marvel Universe Handbook, **THE OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE CONAN UNIVERSE** will be presented in one profusely illustrated thirty-two page volume. "Actually, if you count the inside covers, since there are no ads, it will be thirty-four pages," **Alan Zelenetz**, its chronicler, said. Widely acclaimed for his scripting of **CONAN THE KING**, **KULL** and a host of other Marvel comics, **Alan** was happy to say, "I was in the right place at the right time when this opportunity to do the **Conan** Handbook arose. Basically, we want to introduce the Marvel readers to what exactly the **Conan** Universe is and why it is different from the Marvel Universe. This is not a scholarly volume, nor is it intended to be the definitive reference work. It is an accurate, fairly detailed volume written in a quick lively style."

The **Conan** Handbook also has a strong visual theme to heighten the exotic ambiance of the Hyborian Age and features the works of many of the most popular barbarian artists, among them **Mary Wilshire**, **Ernie Chan**, **Armando Gil**, **Gary Kwapisz**, **Rudy Nebres**, **Bob Camp**, **Andy Kubert**, **Vincent Waller** and more!

"The thing that gives **THE OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE CONAN UNIVERSE** its major practical value is that there will be a cross-reference index," **Alan** said. "This index literally quintupies the amount of information available. For example, even though there is no particular entry for **the Red Brotherhood**, a pirate band, by checking the index you'll discover information about them through the cross-entries about **the Zingaran Freebooters** and **Barachan pirates**."

The volume is organized in alphabetical order and begins with an introductory homage to **Robert E. Howard**. "This appreciation is only fair," **Alan** said. "A lot of the Marvel Conan readers are not readers of the original **Robert E. Howard** stories. This gives us an opportunity to not only let the readers know more about the world of **Conan** and **King Kull**, but also about the man, without whom there never would have been any **Conan** or **King Kull**."

In addition to the entries that deal specifically with the geography and peoples of the period, and specific characters like **Conan**, **Kull**, **Bêlit**, **Red Sonja** and **Valeria**, there are several general topics, among them are **Arms and Armor**, **Sorcerors**, **Demons**, **Gods** and **Worship**. "The reason for this is that we get lots of letters asking about all sorts of details," **Alan** said. "For instance, with **Arms and Armor**, we'd be asked what a longsword looks like compared to a broadsword, etc. The handbook shows all the weapons common to the period, including an illustration of a suit of Hyborean armor with all its parts labeled."

Two of the many visual highlights in the volume are the beautifully detailed maps, one a double-page updated map of the Hyborean World and the other of Atlantis and the Pre-Cataclysmic World.

Because there are so many characters in the **Conan** and **King Kull** sagas, **Alan** was forced to make some hard decisions about who would and could be included. "We pared the character

entries down to the basics," **Alan** said. "There's **Conan**, **Bêlit**, **Valeria** and **Red Sonja**. Then there's an entry for **King Kull** and all the characters in his series. The **King Conan** family, so to speak, is incorporated under the entry for **Aquilonia**."

Even with the wealth of adventures available for his research, occasionally **Alan** would encounter an unusual dearth of information. When that happened, **Alan** said, "I was left to my own devices. Now, in addition to going over all the comics, I also used the original twelve paperbacks of the **Conan** saga and the one **Kull** paperback written by **Howard, L. Sprague de Camp, Lin Carter** and **Bjorn Nyborg**. I made an arbitrary decision not to include the later stories. This is not to slight what came after; rather, a line had to be drawn somewhere, and this seemed to be the logical cut-off because it was these volumes that provided the inspiration and material for what appeared in the comics.

"So, even with that material to draw on, I sometimes found that there was just no information available," **Alan** said. "The best example is **Valeria**. Information about her from **Howard** is fairly skimpy. She appeared in only one story, 'Red Nails.' That's also Marvel's only appearance. In that story, **Valeria** is thrust upon the reader full grown and almost nothing is known about her past. Now, my entry does not give her a complete history, but what I did do is fill in a likely biography

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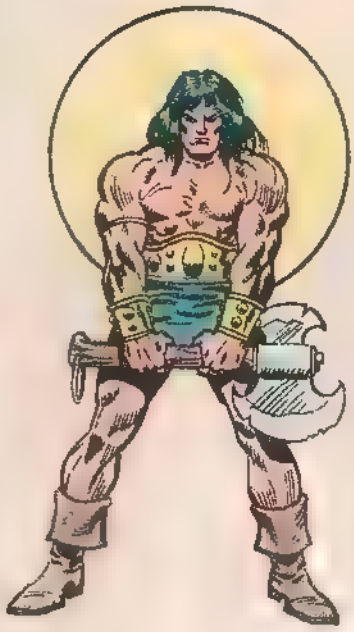

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of her according to what has been happening in the comic book version of the **Conan** saga. And this is an important point to keep in mind. The **Conan** Handbook is designed to present a good working *Marvel* history of the **Conan** and **Kull** sagas. This is not to say that there is anything in this volume that attempts to negate what has been done, and is being done, outside the comics, rather it is directed specifically at the Marvel audience."

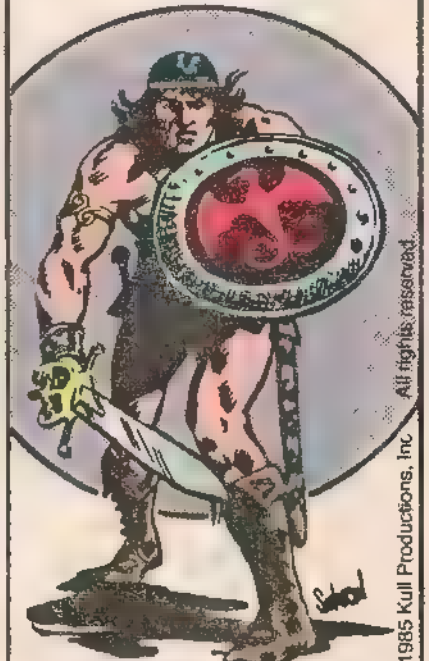
Even though the **Conan** Handbook is not designed nor written as a scholarly tome, **Alan** added certain literary touches, one of them being an appropriate descriptive quotation from **Howard's** original stories at the beginning of the entry. "In 99% of the cases, we were able to use a direct quote, which is then followed by specific information about the entry," **Alan** said. "In the few instances that this proved impossible, like Corinthia, I paraphrased a statement, making sure it stayed true to the spirit of **Howard's** writing."

Though he discovered some gaps of information, **Alan** discovered some pleasant surprises in his research as well.

"One thing I was very surprised and very pleased with was discovering the strong level of historical consistency in the **Conan** stories," **Alan** said. "**Howard's** argument about the setting of his Hyborean adventures and the authenticity of the civilizations in it was that our recorded mythology is actually a crude attempt at remembering the Hyborean Age and the Pre-Cataclysmic's mythology. And what you discover when you follow this line of thought is that indeed, **Howard's** actual nomenclature of places and peoples works very well. For instance, if you super-impose a map of Hyborea over that of the modern world, you discover that the Shemites live in an area that later became Biblical Palestine. And that the Stygians inhabited the Nile river area. Also, many place names from **Howard's** stories have phonetic similarities with their more modern counterparts. This consistency of mythology was very useful to me both working on the **Conan** Handbook and my writing of the stories. It became a unifying theme that caused everything to fall into place for me. And that made everything a lot more exciting."

About the only thing missing from **THE OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE CONAN UNIVERSE** is a list of all the writers and artists and the titles of all the different **Conan** and **King Kull** adventures. "This isn't a check-list," **Alan** said. "It's a handbook about the world of **Conan** and **King Kull**, the countries, the peoples, the religions and everything that makes up the life of that time. A checklist including all this other information would have to be a different and independent project. Whether or not there will be a complete checklist later on, I don't know. I hope so, it would be real interesting."

So say we all, by **Crom**!



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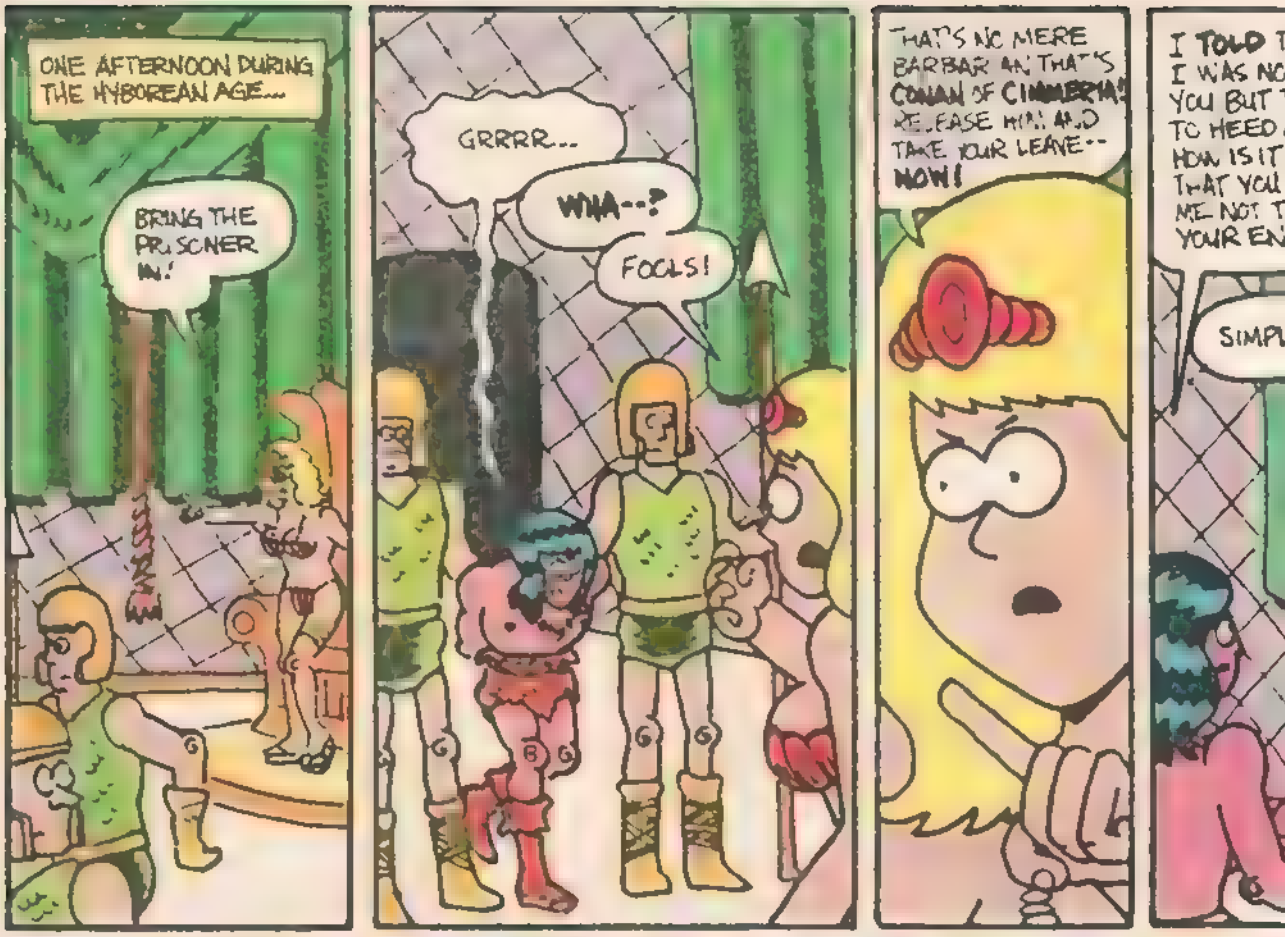

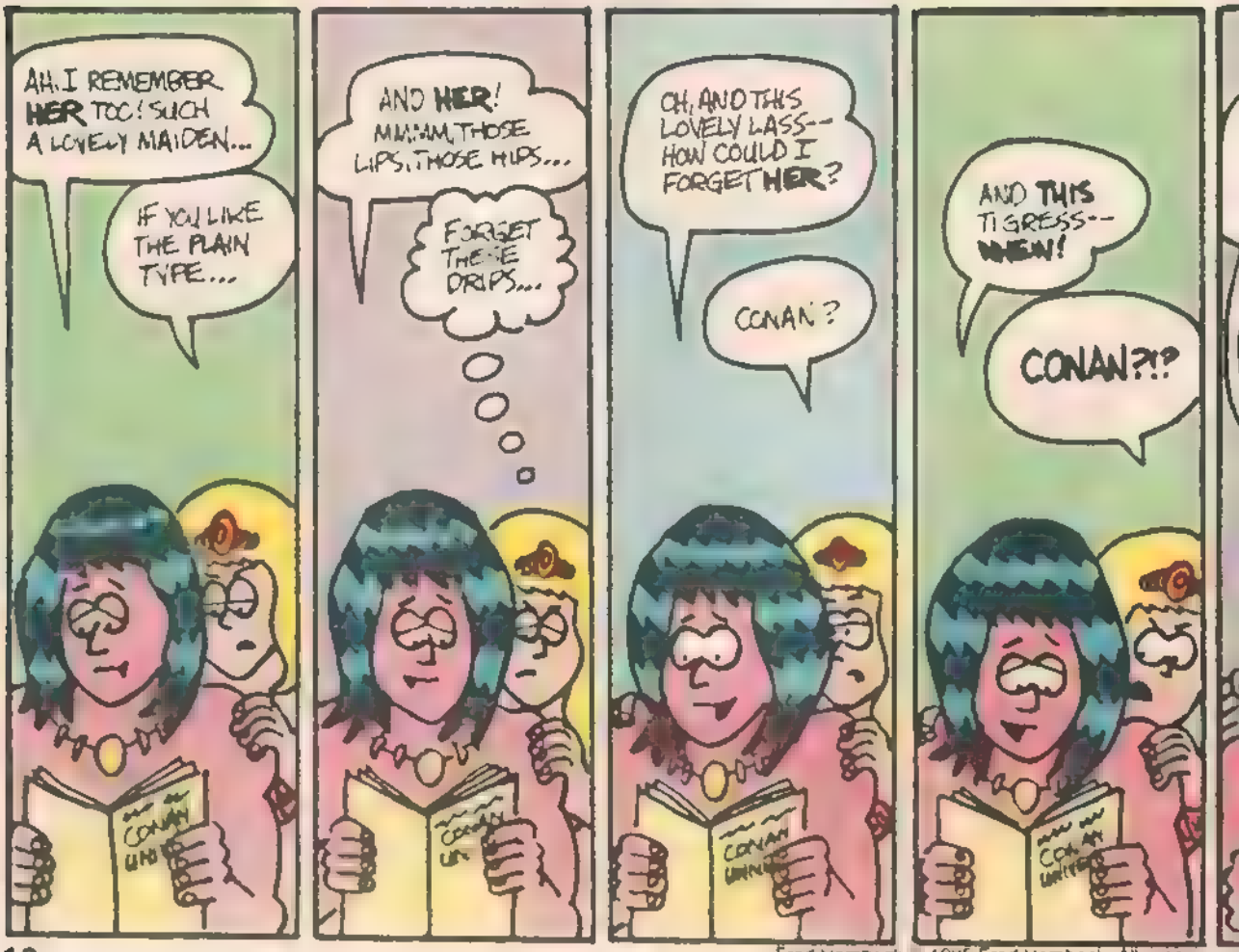
AH, I REMEMBER HER TOO! SUCH A LOVELY MAIDEN...
IF YOU LIKE THE PLAIN TYPE...
AND HER! MMMM, THOSE LIPS, THOSE HIPS...
FORGET THESE DRIPS...
OH, AND THIS LOVELY LASS-- HOW COULD I FORGET HER?
CONAN?
AND THIS TIGRESS-- WHEW!
CONAN?!?

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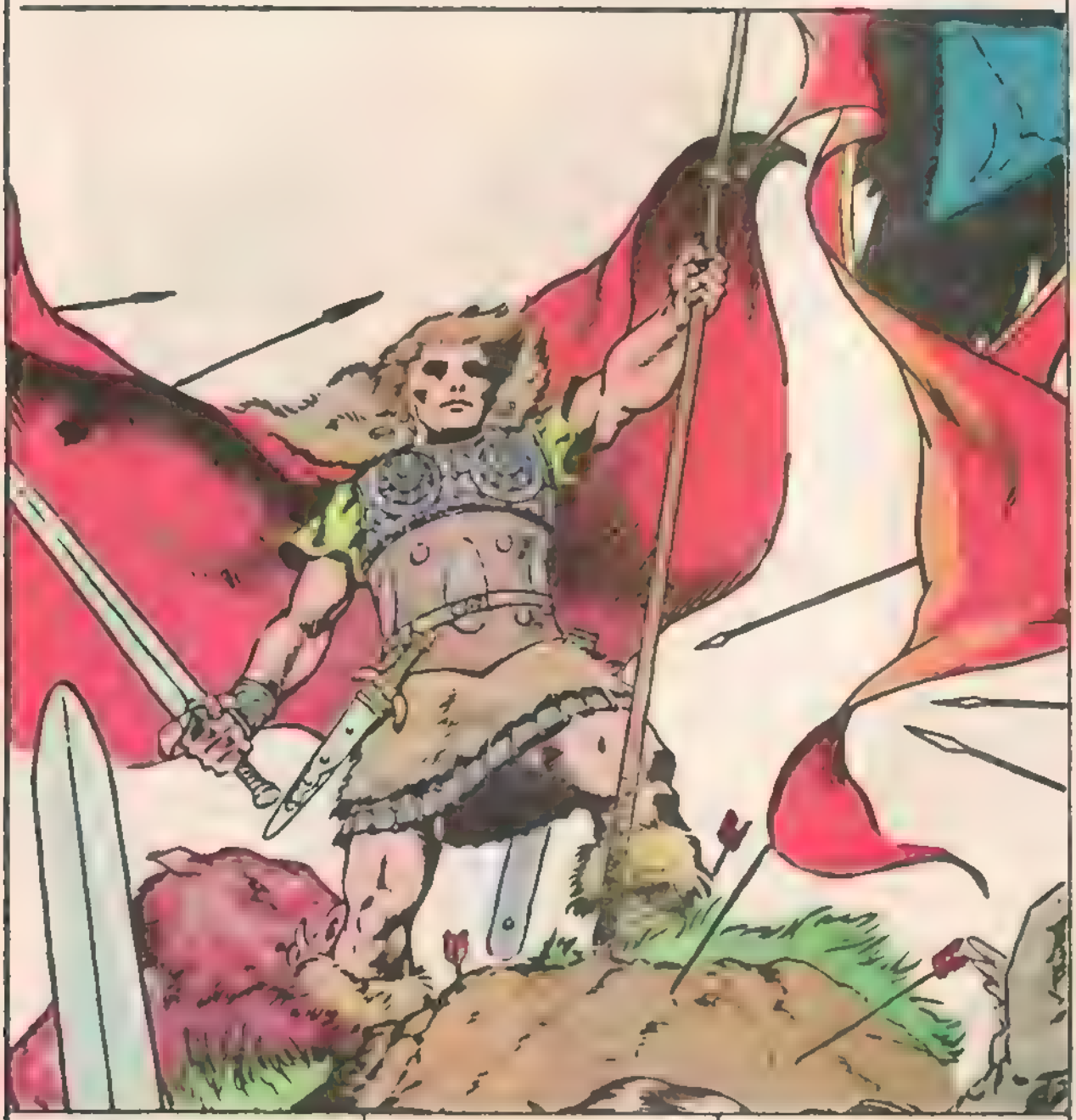
--I READ A... ABOUT YOU IN THE OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF CONAN'S UNIVERSE!
(THOSE MEASUREMENTS-- YUM!)
WHAT SORCERY IS THIS?
CONAN UNIVERSE
LET ME SEE THAT!
STRONG TOO. I REMEMBER THAT I HAD TO RUN HIM THRU THREE TIMES BEFORE HE FINALLY DIED OF THE GHOST.
AND WHAT A BEAUTY THIS ONE WAS.
CONAN!!
CONAN UNIVERSE
eh?
PLUG THE BLASTED TOME AND BE DONE WITH IT!!
UH, OKAY.
FOR EVERYTHING YOU'VE EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT ME AND MY PEOPLE IN THE OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF CONAN'S UNIVERSE NOW FROM THE LAND OF MAGICAL AND AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL DEN OF COMIC BOOK WIZARDRY.
ENOUGH!
MMMMPHH!
THE HORDES STRIKE NOW!

UNFURLING THE RAVEN BANNER



by **Steve Ringgenberg**

Before the Bronze Age, before the fabled Golden Age, and long, long, *long* before the current Asgardian adventures of the mighty Thor during the Marvel Age, there was an Age of Gods and Heroes in Asgard. In the graphic novel, *The Raven Banner* (coming your way in April) artist Charles Vess and writer Alan Zelenetz seek to re-create the excitement and fairy tale wonder of this magical epoch by telling the story of one Greyval, a man of Asgard (although as Alan Zelenetz cannily pointed out "the men of Asgard are *gods*.").

Alan Zelenetz is a name astute Marvelites will recognize immediately as the writer of **MOON KNIGHT, THE ALIEN LEGION, KULL**, and **KING CONAN**. The name **Charles Vess** may seem somewhat less familiar, but that's only because **Vess**'s output for Marvel has so far been rather slim. A single **Dr. Strange** story and a **Warriors Three** tale in **MARVEL FANFARE**, a few black and white and color fantasy stories printed in **EPIC**, a **SPIDER-MAN** cover and a **KING CONAN** cover done in collaboration with his friend **Michael Kaluta**. It was the second of the **MARVEL FANFARE** stories, however, that led directly to the creation of **THE RAVEN BANNER** graphic novel. As **Alan Zelenetz** told the story: "I had gone in to **Ann Nocenti** asking what she needed for **MARVEL FANFARE**, and she said there's this fellow named **Charlie Vess** who wants to draw the World Tree. Want to do a story about the World Tree and **the Warriors Three**? I called **Charlie** at his apartment, and

he wanted to draw the World Tree; he made that very clear . . . We did that short story, then **Charlie** left me a little note at the end of the page asking if I'd be interested in getting together for a full-length graphic novel."

This was a creative union obviously looked upon kindly by the Gods of Asgard, for **Vess** and **Zelenetz** quickly found an editor, **Ralph Macchio**, and just as quickly got an okay from Head Honcho **Jim Shooter**, before they had much besides an idea and a strong desire to work together. Quoth **Shooter**: "Sure. Do it. Give me a plot."

The actual plot used in **THE RAVEN BANNER** was an outgrowth of **Zelenetz's** characteristic painstaking research for the **Warriors Three** story. "I'd come across an actual historical Norse legend; something called The Magic Raven Banner of Orkney belonged to an old Norse King. What the banner did was guarantee victory for the side that carried it, but the standard bearer himself was doomed to die in that battle . . . **Charlie** and I just adapted that legend to Asgard. What made it interesting was the fact that as a legend for mortals, it worked very well, in terms of dying in battle and what have you. In terms of transcending it into the godly realm, we had to work within the structure of how do gods die? How do the Asgardians die within the Marvel frame of reference? Within the Norse frame of reference. fortunately, gods die. That worked well; you know they'll die at Ragnarok, but what we took as our rationale, was, so long as the enemy forces are within the realm of faerie, so to speak, then death is a possibility. A giant can kill a god. Basically that's what we used as our frame of reference in taking it from mortals who die in battle to a god who dies in battle."

With such weighty technical questions disposed of, **Zelenetz** and **Vess** went about peopling their story with characters. First they needed a hero, or heroes, as **Alan Zelenetz** explained: "Originally we were going to have two brothers who were involved, and the search for the banner. One of them was lackadaisical and irresponsible, one of them was responsible, and then we'd play off that. Then we decided that it would be more dramatic to meld those characters into one, and having a character who originally is fearful, cowardly, indifferent, self-righteous, and over the course of the novel, learns to be the opposite of all those things . . . we created a character that could serve the function of living and dying in the course of the narrative, unlike if we had used **Thor** or **Balder** as the main character. So, we created **Greyval**, our own god, who bears The Raven Banner, who fears to bear it, then ultimately carries it and goes through a kind of *Red Badge of Courage* ordeal. It's kind of a mixture of the *Aeneid* and the *Red Badge of Courage* in terms of bearing the past on your shoulders, and also, *The Odyssey*, the travels through Asgard."

One of the reasons **Greyval** goes on the quest for The Raven Banner is because of his marriage to the beautiful Valkyrie, **Signis**. "They marry the day after his father is killed in battle, as tradition. It's to honor his death with life . . . " and while **Zelenetz** admits this is not an authenticated Norse custom, he explains: "It's something that we kind of put together, but it's in the Norse spirit, in other words, his father bids him not to mourn because there's nothing greater than to die in battle . . . The only thing that puts a crimp into his father's death is that his son, who was supposed to have retrieved the banner, has not. The flow of events seduces him from fulfilling that obligation. Nonetheless, he doesn't do it maliciously because he's under the impression that somebody else in Asgard will re-

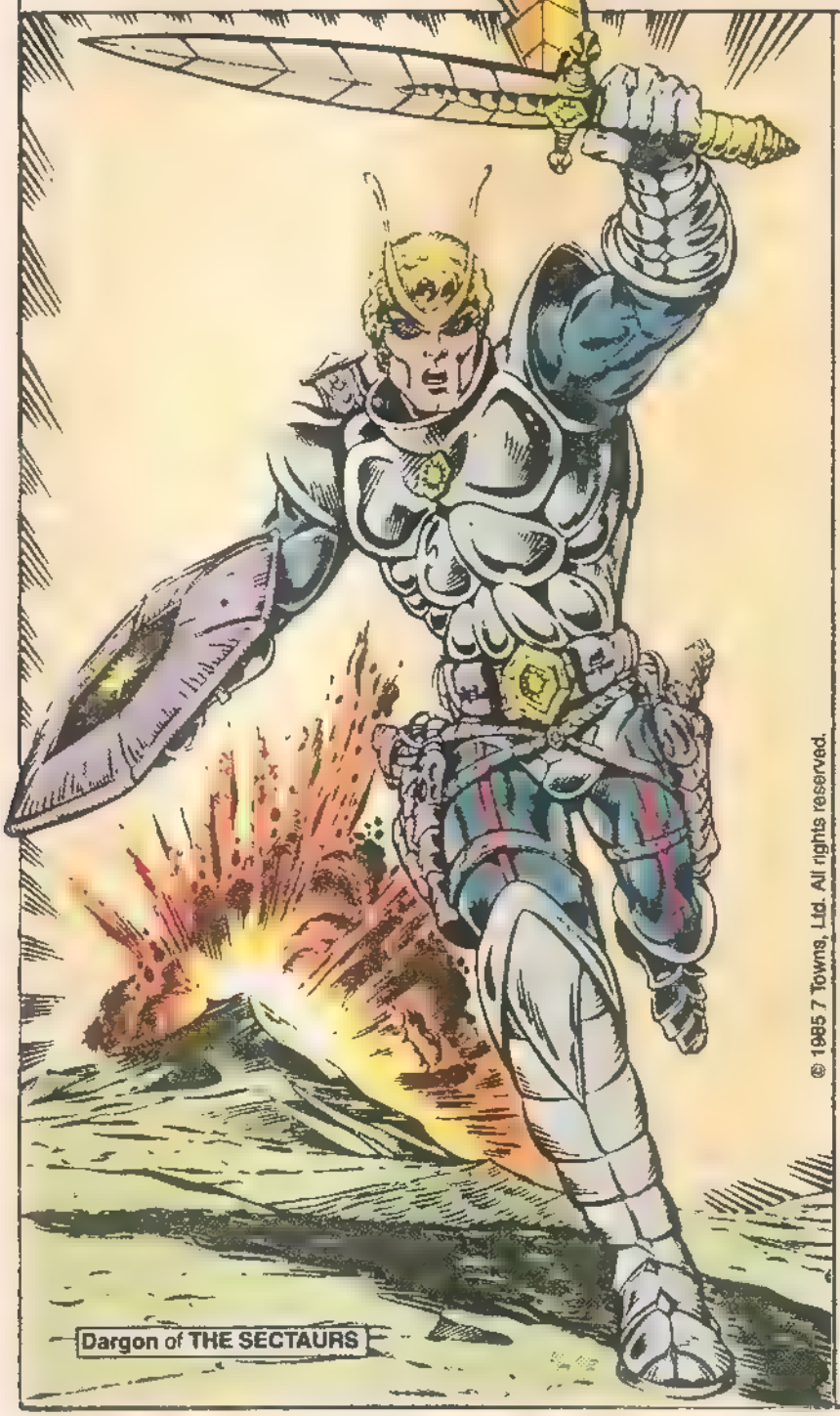
trieve the banner and . . . basically he'll be home free to live eternally with his new bride. The wrinkle in all of this is that (A) His bride has only wed him because of his traditional valor, which is not to imply that it's a loveless marriage, but that's what enamored her of **Greyval**, and (B) It's the trolls who've actually stolen the banner, and **Greyval** is mortified to discover that it wasn't retrieved by an Asgardian . . . "

So, **Greyval** must set out after The Raven Banner with **Balder** as his companion and guide. After a harrowing journey to the Norse underworld, **Balder** exits, leaving **Greyval** in the company of **Oddbrand**, the humanoid otter. Why an otter? "The otter" notes **Zelenetz**, is: " . . . an obvious Norse animal. The otter plays a lot of roles in the Norse mythology . . . Originally, we had **Balder** as the guide for **Greyval**, and then we realized we wanted a comic relief character. Originally it was going to be a bear, I think. We just knew it was going to be an animal because animals in fairy tales play a kind of *doppelgänger* role," adding: "They guarantee to a degree that they serve to create sympathy for your main character, if your main character is kind to animals, even if they're on two legs. He also becomes a kind of **Sancho Panza** . . . becomes to **Greyval** what **Greyval** was to **Balder**, so that **Greyval's** heroism becomes more explicit by having the contrast. We kind of pictured **Oddbrand** as **Lou Costello** . . . He shivers and shakes and gets scared and hides in the shadows, and is always there, though, when needed."

But, even with such allies as **Balder**, **Oddbrand** and **Signis**, **Greyval** is up against some stiff odds in his quest. Barring his way to The Raven Banner will be a *lot* of trolls, a very unfriendly giant, and **Greyval's** treacherous cousin **Horskuld**, who seeks the Raven Banner for his own ends. And however **Greyval's** quest ends, The Raven Banner promises to be a unique and very special graphic novel. **Charles Vess** describes his artwork for the book as: "a cross between **Jack Kirby** and **Arthur Rackham** (the 19th Century illustrator)," partaking of, "the dynamics of **Kirby** and **Rackham's** lyricism." The care and deep committment of both **THE RAVEN BANNER's** creators is nicely expressed by **Alan Zelenetz's** admission: "The first nine months while **Charlie** was pencilling, I was trying to do the first sentence. It's just that we wanted to strike a balance at the very outset; we wanted to let the reader know that there was a fairy tale with epic overtones, at the same time it was well within the comics genre, and it was very important. I want that established at the beginning. I also wanted it established at the very outset that, like it or not, you have to trust the sincerity of the people involved in this endeavor."

THE WORLD OF THE SECTAURS

by Adam Phillips



Dargon of THE SECTAURS

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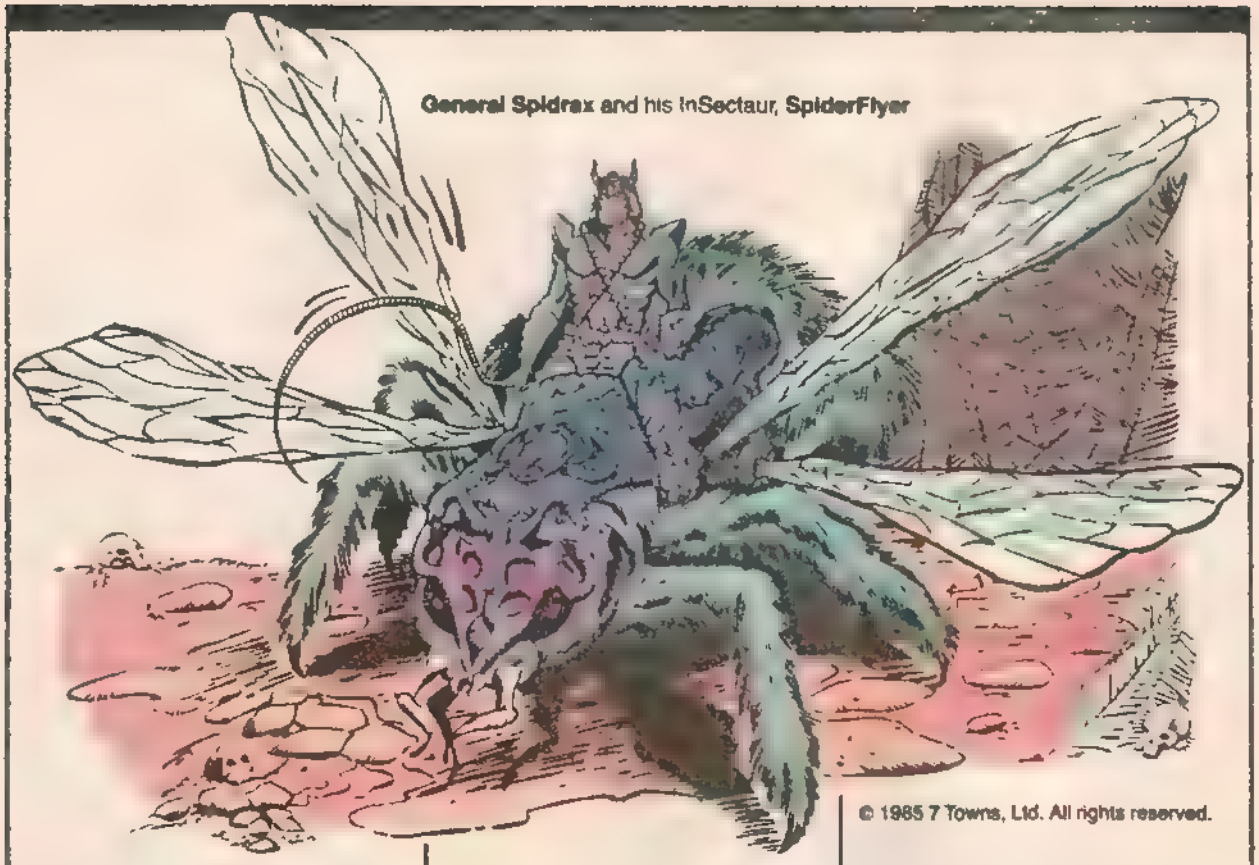
Somewhere, beyond our solar system, there is a planet orbiting twin suns. The planet is Symbion, and it's populated by incredible beings . . . **the Sectaurs,** who are also the stars of a brand new bi-monthly series from Marvel. The series is written by **Bill Mantlo,** drawn by **Mark Texeira** and **Joe DelBeato.** It's based on a new line of action figures from Coleco. The story concept for **THE SECTAURS** was created and developed by Marvel writer / editor **Tom DeFalco** along with series editor **Bob Budiansky,** from Coleco's toy designs.

The planet of Symbion is a world of strange surprises. For example, there are *two* races called Sectaurs—both the Sectaurs proper, and the InSectaurs. What's the connection? Well . . . the Sectaurs are humanoid warriors, and each of them is *mentally linked* to one of the giant, bug-like InSectaurs. This bond is called telebonding, and it is an unbreakable link between a Sectaur and his semi-intelligent InSectaur. The only way this amazing bond can be broken is by death, and even that would leave the surviving Sectaur of the pair severely damaged, and could possibly kill him.

The Symbion of today is a world rife with conflict, divided into two major kingdoms — The Dark Domain and The Shining Realm. Long ago, however, things were different. Symbion was a paradise, ruled by the now-lost sciences of **the Ancient Ones.** The ecology of Symbion was carefully controlled by underground complexes called Hyves, which were spread throughout the planet. But then the Great Cataclysm occurred. No one knows what it was, but it forced **the Ancient Ones** to seal the Hyves. The secret of the Hyves and The Great Cataclysm are both lost in the mystery-shrouded past.

Today, the Shining Realm is ruled by



General Spidrax and his InSectaur, **SpiderFlyer**

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Gelken, the brother of the rightful **King Markor**, who disappeared under mysterious circumstances. **Gelken** is by no means an ideal ruler — he is out of touch with his people and lacks the instincts that make a strong leader. He is more of a bureaucrat, and is content to rule while **Markor's** heroic son, **Dargon**, refuses to ascend the throne as he awaits his father's return.

Gelken may not be able to simply let events follow their course, however. On an expedition from the Dark Domain, the ruthless **General Spidrax** accidentally finds one of the legendary Hyves. While inside the chamber, **Spidrax's** flunky, **Skulk**, triggers a mechanism which releases a brief yet violent storm that sweeps across the planet's surface. Realizing that this may be a potent weapon, **Spidrax** takes the news to his commander, the evil **Empress Devora**. She realizes the true importance of his discovery. According to **Bill Mantlo**, this begins a desperate race between the Dark Domain and the Shining Realm to find the rest of the Hyves, and the Great Crypt of Ancient Wonders which controls them, and ultimately to determine who will rule Symbion — the Dark or the Light.

The Sectaurs fear the power of the **Ancient Ones**, and do not understand it. There is a secret group, **the Keepers of the Way**, who seek to restore the knowledge of **The Ancient Ones**, so that Symbion may return to a golden age. They are spread over all of Symbion, but they cannot act in public, because the Sectaurs distrust the powers they wield. The wise and mysterious **Mantys**, mentor of **Dargon**, is secretly a **Keeper**. He is also a master of the martial art *kai*, and has certain "magical" powers which enable him to contact other **Keepers** on the astral plane.

Dargon does not understand **Mantys**, says **Bob Budiansky**, because **Mantys** has such complete emotional control of himself. His eyes seem to hide knowledge, but he shares this knowledge with no one, not even **Dargon**. **Dargon** received some training from **Mantys** — he's learned to maintain an inner balance, which has led him both to greater prowess as a warrior and to great wisdom, abilities he will need to lead the Shining Realm. **Dargon** is a warrior first, however, and prefers a good fight or skyriding with his friends to the responsibility of leadership. He must rise to the occasion, though, and lead his people through their troubled times. With **King Markor** missing and the Dark Domain out for conquest, **Dargon** cannot merely enjoy himself.

Bob told us about the InSectaurs who are linked to **Mantys** and **Dargon**. **Mantys** is linked to **Graplor**, whose incredible climbing ability is augmented by an extra appendage beneath his pincers. **Dargon's** InSectaur ally is **DragonFlyer**, the mightiest of all InSectaurs in strength and speed, whose razor sharp fangs make him a dangerous fighter as well as a valiant steed, and whose exceptional intelligence makes him an invaluable helper to **Dargon**.

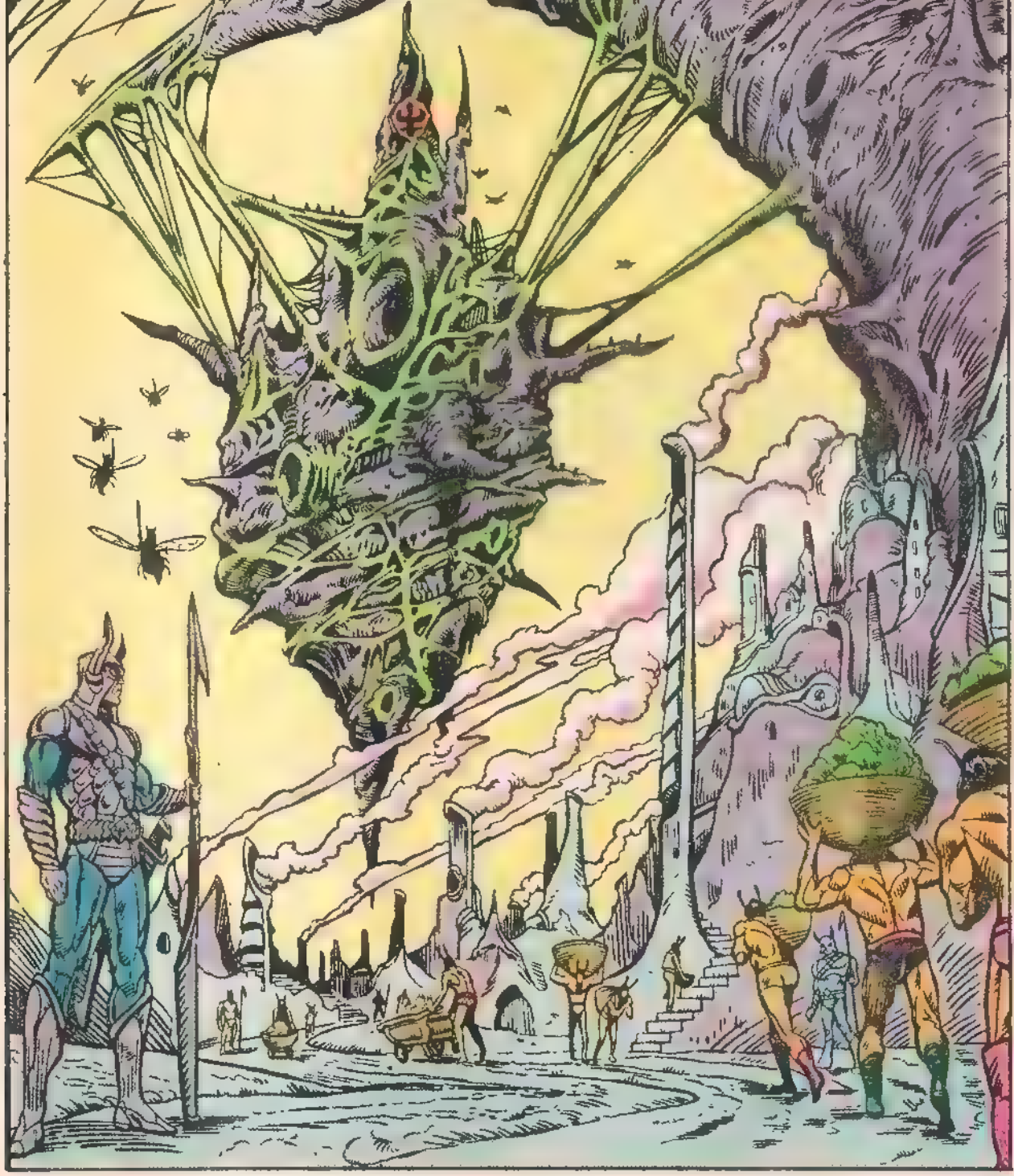
Both **Bill** and **Bob** are excited to be working with **Mark Texeira**, and **Bob** tells us his drawing ability is improving phenomenally, growing with each job he does. **Bob** is working closely with **Mark** on the distinctive look of the series. This is **Mark's** first regular series assignment, and Marvel is happy to have someone with his drive and enthusiasm on **THE SECTAURS**. The series is to be inked by **Joe DeBeato**, another very promising young talent.

The world of **The Sectaurs** is full of interesting characters and relationships. **Bill** is enjoying writing these characters, and told us about some of them, such as **Zak**, **Dargon's** best friend. **Zak** is the leader of a commando group that serves the Shining

Realm. He's short-tempered, and prefers to leave thinking to others, as he wants to enjoy life's every moment. **Dargon** and he have great times together, and are a deadly team in battle. **Bitaur, Zak's** InSectaur partner, is like a living tank, covered with heavy scales and armed with razor sharp teeth. What **Bitaur** lacks in motivation he makes up for in fierceness, especially in battle. **Zak** was betrothed at birth to the beautiful **Belana,** who (unfortunately for **Zak**) is secretly in love with **Dargon. Belana,** a lady-in-waiting in a city-state within the Shining Realm, is a brilliant political assistant to her Queen, and though she's not altogether thrilled with **Zak,** she feels she cannot reveal her love for **Dargon.**

Dargon's bodyguard, the amazingly strong **Pinsor, Bob** described to us as not too sophisticated, and lacking in both humor and social graces. But

A sneak peek at the splash page to SECTAURS #1!



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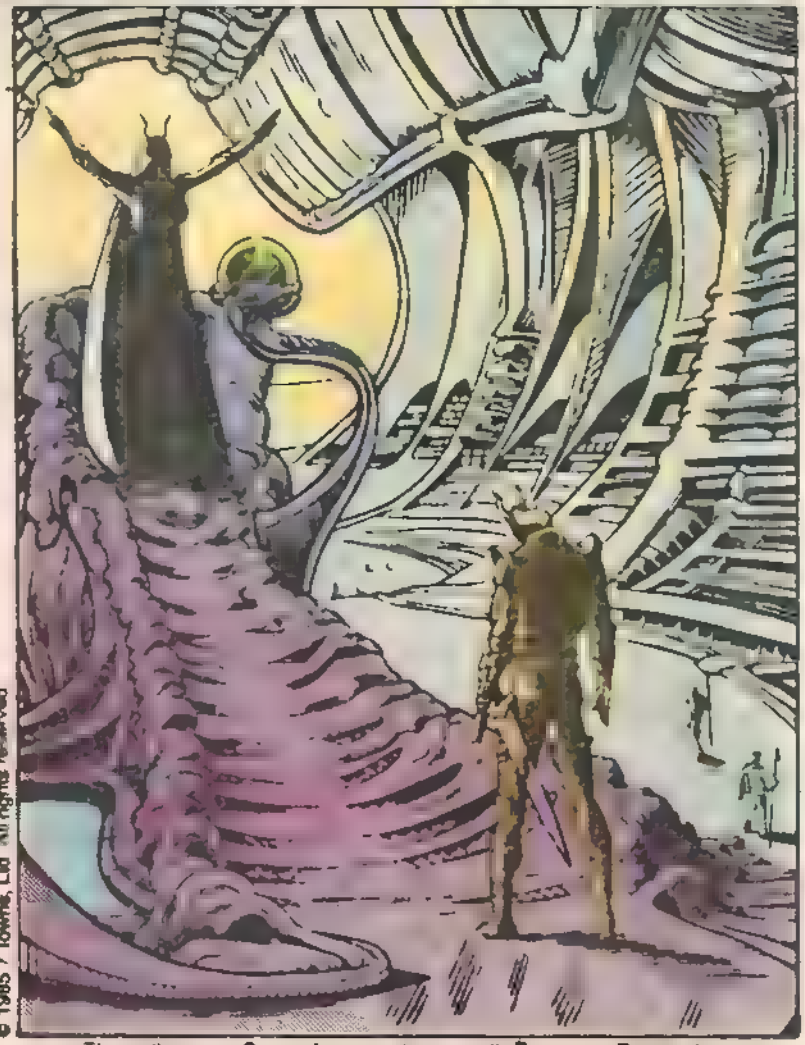

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The villainous **Senrad**, in audience with **Empress Devora**!

he's very devoted to both **Dargon** and The Shining Realm, and would willingly lay down his life for them. He is telebonded to **Battle Beetle**, an InSectaur who seems hyperactive. Only **Pineor** can keep him under control, thanks to telebonding and his soothing voice. **Battle Beetle's** nervous energy makes him invaluable in any battle, however.

If **Dargon** is the ultimate force for good in the Shining Realm, his opposite number in the Dark Domain is **General Spidrax**. Ruthlessly leading a barbarian horde, **Spidrax** lusts for power and the throne of the Dark Domain. He is telebonded to **Spider-Flyer**, an InSectaur with spider-like powers, multiple eyes and a distinctly negative way of looking at the world. **Spidrax** is commanded by the Dark Empress **Devora**, who cloaks herself in mystery, issuing orders through her chief administrator, **Senrad**. She believes death to be both the only punishment for failure, and the only excuse. Cold hearted and cruel, she wants only one thing: all of Symbion under her heel!

Also under **Devora's** command is **Commander Waspax**, the leader of **the Empress's** elite corps of shock troops. He is a master swordsman, and competes furiously with **Spidrax** for **the Empress'** favor. He'll go to any lengths to gain more fame and power. Very vain, he sees himself as a hero to the Dark Domain. **Wingid** is his egotistical InSectaur, whose battle style is as treacherous as his master. He likes to swoops down silently on his enemy, attack with his venom-filled pike, and wing away, avoiding direct combat.

Waspax is secretly in love with the Sorceress **Scorpia**, another **Keeper of the Way**, and half sister of **General Spidrax**. She is a renegade **Keeper**, has never learned the secret of inner harmony, and has turned to evil. She rules a menacing castle of terror, full of traps, dangerous creatures and death. Passion rules **Scorpia**, and she makes no efforts to keep her baser emotions in check. She, too, loves **Dargon**, and seeks to win him over to evil.

The fantasy world of **THE SECTAURS** is rich in new concepts and ideas. One of the most interesting of these comes from the fact that Symbion has almost no metal at all. The Sectaurs have learned to cultivate an organic substance called *skall*. This is virutally the only knowledge from the time of **the Ancient Ones** that is not held in fear. Skall is grown through a mysterious science called *bionetics*, and can be shaped into an infinite variety of tools and weapons. It is tougher than iron, and may be tempered to incredible strength.

Bill Mantlo brings to the series his experience as writer on many previous Marvel series, among them **THE INCREDIBLE HULK** and **PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN**. He says he's as excited about **THE SECTAURS** as he was when he first heard of his other toy-based projects, **THE MICRONAUTS** and **ROM, SPACEKNIGHT**. He wants to make this comic as interesting and unique as those, and is trying to make the characters as distinctive and believable as possible. **Bill** has already written the nine "in-pack" comics that are included with the toys, and says that the experience was a good way for him to get a good grip on what each character is like.

Editor **Bob Budiansky** is very pleased about working with **Bill** and the new talents of **Mark Texeira** and **Joe DeBeato**. **Mark's** previous work on the **BUCKAROO BANZAI** adaptation, as well as the **SECTAURS** model sheets, shows great promise. **Bob** is also confident that **Bill** and **Mark**, together, will bring out the best the series has to offer. Picking just one example, **Bob** points out that examining the relationship between the InSectaurs and Sectaurs could lead into hundreds of fascinating storylines — and that's just *one* part of the series. Symbion is an incredible world, full of strange characters and concepts, and in the midst of it all, **the Sectaurs** stand ready to search for the Hyves, wage war, seek out the secrets of **the Ancient Ones** and the Great Cataclysm, track down **Dargon's** vanished father and more. It all starts next month, and **Bob, Bill, Mark** and **Joe** (not to mention **Dargon** and company), are just waiting for you!

STAR SPOTLIGHT ON WALLY™

by **Sandy Heussler**

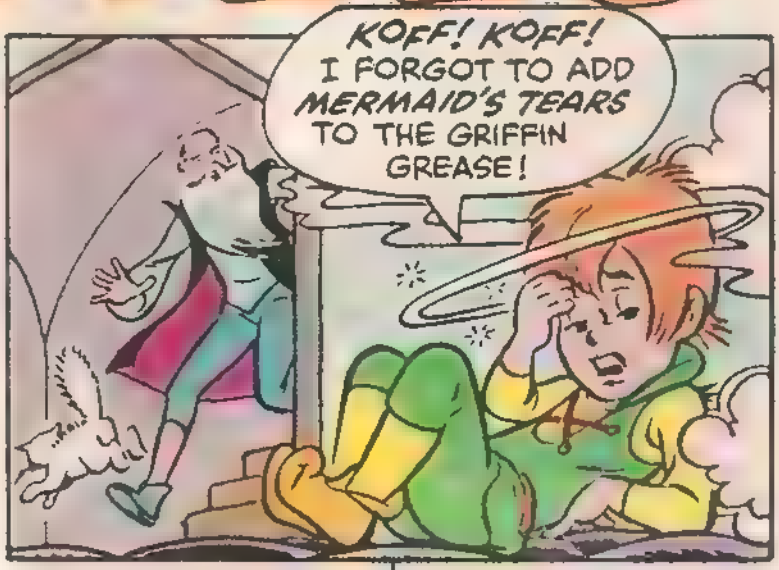
The story of the sorceror's apprentice is one which has delighted generations of children. The classic tale has been retold in many genres — musical, literary, and even as a **Walt Disney** animated film featuring **Mickey Mouse**. Now Star Comics will be presenting their own special twist on this popular theme — **WALLY THE WIZARD**.

The major creative force behind **WALLY** is writer / artist **Bob Bolling**. **Bob** has been one of the mainstays at Archie Comics for over twenty years. He has worked on all of the various Archie titles and created the popular **LITTLE ARCHIE** series. Presently, he is working on **ARCHIE AND ME**, and **SABRINA**.

Bob's arrival at Star Comics was arranged by editor **Tom DeFalco**. **Tom** had, earlier in his career, worked for Archie Comics and knew and admired **Bob**'s work. "A couple of years ago when things were bad for everyone," **Bob** told **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE**, "**Tom** got in touch with me." **DeFalco** had an idea for a book that would take place in medieval times and would feature a boy who was apprenticed to a wizard.

The idea intrigued **Bob**. He liked the idea of doing a book set in the medieval period and always enjoyed doing stories involving kids. He felt the concept had great potential for a lot of different kinds of stories. The period plus the idea of wizardry would see to that. So he sat down and went to work to create a very special world for a very special character — **WALLY**.

Bob is very enthusiastic about the series. He feels that **Wally** is a character the reader can identify with easily.



He has also developed a whole slew of varied and interesting supporting characters.

Wally lives in a world of dragons and demons. His master, the wizard **Merlin**, is renowned for his wisdom and power. **Merlin**, while a tolerant master, sometime despairs over his choice of **Wally** as his apprentice. **Wally**, however, always manages to do the right thing, even if it's in the wrong way.

Wally's closest friends are **Conrad** and **Jay**. **Conrad** is squire to the great knight **Sir Flauntaroy** and very proud of the fact. **Jay** is a minstrel who is never without his lyre. **Wally**'s lady love is the beautiful but haughty **Princess Penelope**, but she doesn't seem to return his affection. **Penelope**'s servant, **Alaina**, however, secretly adores **Wally**.

And what's a hero without villains? **Bob Bolling** has created for this book as evil and slimy a group of nasties as have ever graced the pages of a Marvel comic in the inhabitants of Bludmire Castle. There lives **Vastar the Vile** . . . whose sole ambition is to wrest control of the kingdom from the rightful monarch. Living with him are his sister, **Sybillious the Billous**, who would prefer that **Vastar** spend his money on heating their drafty castle, and the wicked wizard **Erasmo**, who builds deadly toys — a robot locust, for example.

Bob was rather secretive about his future plans for **WALLY**. "I have nagging bits of things in the corner of my mind," he confided to **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE**. "Nothing definite." He does plan to tell the origin of a character known as **Victor Viking**, a shipwrecked boy who believes that his parents, a Viking couple, will come back for him.

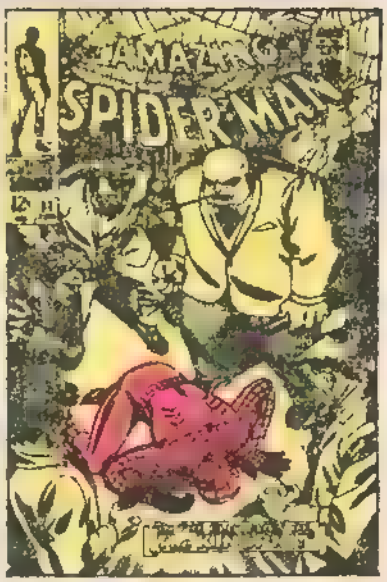
With such a great talent as **Bob Bolling** at the helm of **WALLY**, there's no doubt that the book will be a real treat. So be sure to reserve your copy now. You'll be glad you did.

THE MARVEL AGE — 1967 (Part 1)

by **Kurt Busiek**

1967 was a terrific year for the House of Ideas. Marvel's ten all-new adventure titles were flourishing — and all of them had their own distinctive atmosphere! From the straight-on heroics of **THE AVENGERS** to the cosmic wonderment of **THE FANTASTIC FOUR** — the regal splendor of **THOR** to quirky fun-and-games with the cast of **DAREDEVIL** — or from the super-charged adventure of **TALES OF SUSPENSE** to the other-wordly fantasy of **TALES TO ASTONISH** — there was something exciting and different in every title. But it still had the hallmark that made it uniquely Marvel — all the series fit neatly together, making the Marvel Universe one fascinating world — one big sprawling story that the readers could get to know better with every issue we put out. Even though every series had its own special style that kept the Marvels from being interchangeable — still, **the Sub-Mariner** could meet **the Avengers**, **Spider-Man** could meet **the X-Men**, or **Thor** could cross paths with **Daredevil**, and it all still made sense. And I'm not just picking hypothetical examples — all that happened, as you'll see, as we check out what was doing in the Marvel of '67 from A to . . . well, from A to X!

The Avengers were in turbulent times — it still wasn't so long ago that **Captain America** had taken it on himself to train three former super-villains (**Hawkeye**, **Quicksilver**, and **the Scarlet Witch**) into the world's greatest fighting team. As 1967 kicked off, two original members, **Goliath** and **the Wasp**, were back in the team, and tensions were running high — and the fact that **Hawkeye** was in love with former enemy spy **Natasha Romanoff** (aka **the Black Widow**), and wanted her to join **the Avengers**, wasn't helping any! But all personal differences were dropped when the team was called to action — as they were when the vacationing **Quicksilver** and **Scarlet Witch** were captured in Central Europe by an interstellar tyrant named **Ixar**, who planned to drain the powers of **the Avengers** and use them to make his army of robot **Ultroids** completely invincible. **The Avengers** managed to fight him to a standstill, but if not for the timely intervention of **the Black Widow**, all would have been lost. **Natasha's** moment of glory didn't last long, however — she immediately (or so it seemed) betrayed **the Avengers** and the United States by stealing some vital secrets and heading for Red China with them. The heartbroken **Hawkeye** didn't have time to fret, though — because **Hercules** had shown up, under the spell of the Asgardian **Enchantress**, and he was out for blood! **The Avengers** managed to snap **Herc** out of it though, and the Olympian demi-god immediately decided to remain and join the team. His raw power came in very handy too, as the team faced in rapid succession: **The Mad Thinker** and his **Triumvirate of Terror**, **the Sub-Mariner** (who had to be kept from the awesome Cosmic Cube if the surface world was to survive), and **Diablo** and the ever-amazing **Dragon Man**! But even **Hercules'** might, while it helped against **Dragon Man**, couldn't anticipate **Diablo** capturing **the Wasp** and holding her hostage until **Goliath** turned against and destroyed **the Avengers**! Only the sudden return of **Captain America** (who had been absent and under suspicion of treason, for reasons we'll get to when we scan **TALES OF SUSPENSE**) saved the day. Shortly thereafter, **Hawkeye** learned that **the Black Widow** had been on a secret mission for **S.H.I.E.L.D.** — and her seeming betrayal was only her cover story! She needed **Avengers** assistance — and they were only too happy to give it! **Hercules** and **Hawkeye** headed to China to save her — only to run smack into **the Red Guardian**, a super-hero from the other side, and coincidentally, **the Black Widow's** husband! When the other **Avengers** came to help, **the Black Widow** became a widow in fact as well as name, when **the Guardian** laid down his life so that the ideals personified by **the Avengers**, and not confined to any one nation — would survive. **The Avengers** got back to the States in time to face possibly the greatest menace of their career — **the**



Mandarin had brought together **Power Man** (not **Luke Cage** — the one who's now the villainous **Goliath**), **the Swordsman** (then still a villain), **the Living Laser**, **the Enchantress** and **the Executioner**, for one big push to take over the world. That the attempt failed was only because **the Avengers** stood together, unified. But that unity seemed threatened — **Quicksilver** began acting hostile to humanity, and though **the Avengers** managed to work together long enough to beat **the Super-Adaptoid**, rocky times were ahead. After a desperate battle against **Whirlwind** in which **Goliath** and **the Wasp** nearly lost their lives, **Captain America** quit the team for personal reasons, and **Hercules** returned to Olympus. As if that wasn't bad enough, a young scientist in England, **Dane Whitman**, inadvertantly freed **Magneto** from his alien prison — and **Quicksilver** and **the Scarlet Witch** returned to the side of their former commander, this time apparently for good! All of this kicked off an epic that introduced the new **Black Knight** and tangled **the Avengers** up with **the X-Men** — but it happened in 1968.

Meanwhile, **Daredevil** started off the year with his secret identity threatened — and came up with possibly the whackiest way of protecting it ever! When it became almost undeniable that shy, repressed, sightless **Matt Murdock** was truly **Daredevil** — he gave his partner **Foggy Nelson** and secretary **Karen Page** a much better suspect — his "twin brother" **Mike! Mike** was everything **Foggy** and **Karen** thought a super hero would be: loud, arrogant, obnoxious, and totally irrepressible! **Mike** was, of course, merely **Matt** in a tacky sport suit and loud sunglasses, but the personality change was so dramatic that it fooled them. And while "**Mike**" kept **DD's** secret identity safe, the sightless adventurer was left unhampered while he unmasked **the Masked Marauder** (who turned out to be, of all people, **Nelson** and **Murdock's** *building superintendant!*), grounding **the Leap-Frog** and cutting **Stilt-Man** down to size. The **Mike Murdock** identity came in handy when **Daredevil** was unmasked by the mob — since he turned out to be **Matt Murdock** it was obvious that he wasn't truly **Daredevil** — he was just masquerading as the hero in the absence of **Mike**, to desperately try to bluff his way to victory — or so **Matt** led everyone to believe. But all this multiple-identity stuff seemed to go to **Matt's** head — because when the **Cobra** and **Mr. Hyde** came along, **Matt** tried to flush them out by disguising himself as **Thor**! This gambit not only nearly got him killed by the villains — but it attracted the ire of a certain God of Thunder, who didn't take kindly to being impersonated! As if that wasn't bad enough, **Daredevil** ended up losing his radar-sense just before taking on the two mega-villains for real! Blind and nearly helpless, **Daredevil** still managed to out-think and out-maneuver two villains who were *way* out of his league! After a short bout with **the Beetle** at Expo '67, **Daredevil** found himself up against **the Trapster**, who was anxious to bolster his sagging reputation by killing a super hero (he even went to **Nelson** and **Murdock** for legal advice on how to commit murder and get away with it!). The year ended with **Daredevil** fighting **the Trapster** — unaware that one of Marvel's biggest villains was waiting in the wings to ensnare him in one of his weirdest stories ever! Who do I mean? Well, I'll give you a hint — at the beginning of the year, this villain had swiped the power of **the Silver Surfer** and **the Fantastic Four** were helpless to stop him.

That's right. But while the menace of a cosmic-powered **Doctor Doom** would have been enough for most comic books, in **THE FANTASTIC FOUR**, it had to share space with the efforts of **the Inhumans** to escape from behind the barrier that imprisoned them in the Great Refuge. And escape **the Inhumans** did — just as **Reed Richards** managed to dupe **Doctor Doom** into challenging the might of **Galactus'** barrier. The barrier stood fast against the power cosmic, and **Doom** lost his stolen power, and barely escaped with his life. But that was only how 1967 began! As soon as **the FF** were back in New York, they were attacked by **the Sandman**! Attempting to trap the world's nastiest human beach in the Negative Zone, **Reed** not only trapped *himself* in the eerie other-dimension — but he made it possible for **Blastaar**, a tyrannical criminal from the Zone, to escape. Only the intervention of **Crystal** and **Triton of the Inhumans** saved **Reed** from sure death. But that didn't stop **Blastaar** and **the Sandman** from teaming up. Then it was up to **Reed's** swift brain to redeem his earlier mistakes — while **the Thing** managed to dissipate **the Sandman** in the East River, **Reed** built a machine that could rob **Blastaar** of his powers. But even

though that threat was over, life is never easy for **the Fantastic Four**. Even a normal vacation turned into a disaster, when they disturbed a long-buried relic of an alien race — a giant killer robot that was the first Earth knew of **the Kree**, who've figured in many a Marvel epic since. The defeat of **the Sentry Sinister** brought down the wrath of **the Kree**, in the form of **Ronan the Accuser**. It was **the Thing** who managed to turn **Ronan's** Ultimate Weapon back on him, so it was **the Accuser** who was vaporized and not **the FF**. So by this time in '67, **the FF** had been tangled up with **Dr. Doom**, **the Silver Surfer**, **the Inhumans**, the Negative Zone, **the Sandman**, **Blastaar**, and **the Kree**. Sound like enough cosmic concepts for one year? Well, most people would've thought so, but not **Stan Lee** and **Jack Kirby** — who casually kicked off one of the most far-reaching stories in the Marvel Universe when they introduced **the Beehive** and "**Him**" (later to become **Adam Warlock**). **Alicia** had been kidnapped by the evil scientific enclave to help them in their experiments, while **the FF** fought **Ronan** — and as soon as they could, **the FF** followed **Alicia**, just in time to be present at the birth of **Him** — the godlike, nearly omnipotent being that put an end to his evil progenitors schemes. When **Him** left to find his destiny in the stars, we had no idea it was only the beginning of the tragic story of the ultimate champion of life. But then, **THE FANTASTIC FOUR** was like that. What other comic would take a simple, down-to-Earth story like **the Invisible Girl** discovering she was pregnant, and manage to involve **Psycho-Man**, **the Inhumans**, and **the Black Panther**? Anyway, amid the festivities surrounding comicdom's First Family looking forward to the next generation, a mysterious villain (**the Mad Thinker**, but don't tell anyone), took advantage of **the Thing's** self-pity to gain mental control of him, and the year ended with a fighting-mad **Thing** out to destroy his team-mates.

Meanwhile, Marvel was launching a completely different kind of comic book. 1967 saw the release of the first five issues of **NOT BRAND ECCH**, the magazine that advertised itself with the line, "Who says a comic book has to be good?" **NOT BRAND ECCH** was a new kind of humor magazine — since not only did it lampoon Marvel's greatest series (and some of our competitors as well), but the parodies were done by the Marvel creators themselves! Side-splitting stories of **the Fantastical Four**, **Scaredevil**, **the Mighty Sore** and **Charlie America** were told by such people as **Stan Lee**, **Jack Kirby**, **Gene Colan** and **Marie** and **John Severin**! Working so carefully on the real books, these creators knew just how to turn them inside out, knew just how to turn drama into whacked-out humor. To give you an example of how off-the-wall **NOT BRAND ECCH** could be, **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE's** mixed-up mascot **Irving Forbush** made his debut as **Forbush-Man** on the cover of the first issue and even appeared in several stories of his own. Marvel was poking fun at itself, and nobody did it better.

Meanwhile, World War II was being fought (in 1967?) by **SERGEANT FURY AND HIS HOWLING COMMANDOS. The Howlers** were all over the world battling the Axis menace. They started the year in the Mediterranean, where they teamed up with a heroic Nisei officer, and ended the year fighting the battle of the Pacific on Tarawa Island. In between they went underground in France, met **the Desert Fox** in North Africa, and even managed to thwart a Nazi invasion of London — while on *leave!* Along the way, we not only saw **the Howlers** face personal crises as well as enemy soldiers, but we learned the true story behind their first mission — and how they got their strange name!

Back in the present of eighteen years ago, there was one super hero who was taking the world by storm, and making the name of Marvel Comics a household word. He was, of course, **Spider-Man**. Spidey kicked off '67 in heated combat with **the Lizard** — but to make matters tough, **Spidey** had hurt his arm, and was up against one of his most powerful villains while wearing a sling! As soon as the menace of **the Lizard** was ended, **Peter Parker** tried to go on with normal life, finally moving out of his **Aunt May's** house and into a brand-new apartment. But trouble is never far behind for **Spidey** — and in this case, it came in the form of **The Shocker**. And **Kraven the Hunter**. And a new, younger version of **The Vulture**! Between school, the gorgeous **Gwen Stacy**, **Flash Thompson** shipping out for Viet Nam, **Norman Osborne** acting strange (you'd act odd if *you* were secretly **the Green Goblin**), and these super-villains, **Spidey** really had to juggle his time! For a while, it looked like something was going to give, and that something was going to be **Spidey**. **Peter Parker** nearly gave up the heroic role he'd taken on after the death of his **Uncle Ben** — and it took the introduction of one of the best-hated bad guys in Marvel history to stop him. **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN** #50 featuring the first-ever appearance of the massive mobster known as **the Kingpin** — and **Peter** had to realize once more that as long as there are evil men in the world, and he has the power to stop them, he has a responsibility to protect and defend the innocents of the world, no matter what it takes. What it took in this case to stop **the Kingpin** was the sacrifice of **Frederick Foswell**, who may not have had the power of **Spider-Man**, but certainly had the courage. **Foswell**, a former criminal, laid down his life to save others — so how could **Spider-Man** even think of faltering in his resolve? Well, that resolve was tested, and plenty, when **Doctor Octopus** returned, and by a quirk of fate, rented a spare room in **Spidey's Aunt May's** house! With **Aunt May** an innocent hostage, and **Doc Ock** determined to destroy **Spider-Man**, the future looked bleak for poor **Peter** — and it looked even worse when **Ock** caused **Spider-Man** to develop amnesia! Not knowing who he was, **Spidey's** confused state made him *team up* with **Doc Ock** — and become the menace **J. Jonah Jameson** had always said he was! By the end of the year **Spider-Man** had realized he was no crook, and **Doc Ock** was an enemy — but he still had no idea who he really was!

Next Month: Our journey through 1967 concludes, with a look at Marvel's other magazines. While all this was going on, **Nick Fury** was experiencing life under **Steranko**, **Doctor Strange** was saving Earth from **the Living Tribunal**, **the Hulk** was journeying to Wundagore, **the Sub-Mariner** was locked in combat with **the Plunderer**, **Iron Man** was in serious trouble with **the Grey Gargoyle**, **Captain America** was turning traitor to do the bidding of **the Red Skull**, **Thor** was trapped on Earth with only half his power, and **the X-Men** were desperately trying to save humanity from the machinations of **Factor Three**! We'll have all the details for you, so don't miss out!

Bullpen Bulletins

DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS . . .

I attended the Dallas Fantasy Fair last weekend, November 23-25, 1984, where as Editor in Chief, I autographed hundreds of Marvel Comics, and, as scripter of *Marvel Super Heroes Secret Wars*, I autographed *thousands* of copies of that particular limited series which he acted modestly is the most successful, best-selling comics series of the last few decades.

Texas is great. Seldom I heard a discouraging word, and skies were not cloudy all day!

SPEAKING OF TEXAS FANS . . .

There's a Marvel fan club down there called YHAPA made up of enthusiastic young collectors. I hear they're a great bunch. If you're interested in information, write

YHAPA
641 Tiffany Drive
Richardson, Texas
75081

I don't usually do plugs for fan clubs in this column because I get so many requests, but *that's* how impressed I was with the crew down there. You should have seen their reaction when I announced that we were doing a sequel to *Secret Wars* (starting in April). Wow.

AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR SUBSCRIPTION DEPARTMENT . . .

Dear Subscribers,

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THAT'S ALL FOR NOW . . .

But check here next month for an important announcement regarding an awards balloting where you have a chance to vote for your favorites!

Hang in there!

Jim Shooter

HYPE BOX

STAR COMICS — Marvel's new line of Star Comics does it again for the second month in a row! Joining Planet Terry and Wally the Wizard are Royal Roy, the Muppet Babies, the Getalong Gang, and, direct from the "Star Wars" saga, the Ewoks! You won't want to miss any of their exciting, fun-filled, *all-new first issues!* And there's more — the surprise sensation of last year's MARVEL TAILS is now appearing in a whole series of brand-new adventures! That's right, because you demanded it, Peter Porker, the Spectacular Spider-Ham swings into action again! Star Comics — there's a galaxy of fun in every issue!

CLOAK AND DAGGER #1 — They've guest-starred in several Marvel comics, they've had their own Limited Series and you still want more! Well, thanks to BILL MANTLO, RICK LEONARDI, and TERRY AUSTIN, you're getting more! Cloak and Dagger will be coming at you every other month in their own regular comics series! Join the Creature of Light and the Demon of Darkness as they team up to protect the children of New York from the forces of evil! It's action the way you like it!

ROCKET RACCOON #1 — He is a mammal of many missions in a galaxy that never lets him catch his breath. He must prevent total war, save his true love, and escape the looney bin that is his universe! And that's just for starters! Find out what's been happening to the furry fury since his guest appearance in THE INCREDIBLE HULK — you won't believe your eyes! But you can believe that BILL MANTLO, MIKE MIGNOLA and AL GORDON have created four fast-paced issues that will knock your paws off!

MOONSHADOW #1 — J.M. DeMATTEIS (writer) and JON J MUTH (artist) have collaborated on a story which is uniquely suited for the EPIC COMICS line. This beautifully painted fairy tale for the 1980's will be especially appreciated by adults who remember the 1960's. Why? Because this first issue relates the tale of how Sunflower, a 1960's flower child, was kidnapped by aliens and bore a child. His name is Moonshadow, and this is his story. Reserve your copy *now* at your local comics shop — you'll be glad you did!

CHECK LIST

THE MIGHTY MARVEL CHECKLIST

- **THE THING #23** — The Thing is back on Earth, but he's not back with the FF! Featuring special guest star DOCTOR [illegible]
- **DAREDEVIL #218**
- **NEW MUTANTS #27**
- **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #2**
- **RED SONJA #9**
- **CONAN THE KING #28** — Featuring ... Red Sonja!
- **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #264**
- **CAPTAIN AMERICA #305** — From across the Atlantic Ocean, it's Captain Britain!
- **POWER PACK #10** - Guest-starring Marrina from *Alpha Flight*!
- **MICRONAUTS #8**
- **ALPHA FLIGHT #22**
- **INDIANA JONES #29**
- **DAZZLER #37**
- **DUNE (Limited Series) #2**
- **[illegible] #307**
- **AVENGERS #255** — Featuring the new regular members! John Buscema and [illegible]
- **CONAN THE BARBARIAN #170**
- **MARVEL TALES #[illegible]** — featuring [illegible] and STEVE DITKO from *Amazing Spider-Man* #1!
- **ROM #66** — Rom leaves Earth! What will happen now? A MANTLO/ORTIZ/LEIALOHA spectacular!
- **POWER MAN & IRON FIST #117**
- **G.I. JOE #35**
- **X-MEN #193** — A double-size special celebrating the first 100 issues of the new X-Men!
- **FANTASTIC FOUR #278** — Dr. Doom is back!
- **IRON MAN #194**
- **PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #102**
- **DEFENDERS #143**
- **STAR WARS #96**
- **THOR #355**
- **CLOAK AND DAGGER #1** — Now in their own regular series at last! See Hype Box!
- **ROCKET RACCOON (Limited Series) #1** — Blast off on adventure with the most daring raccoon in the galaxy! See Hype Box!
- **2010 (Limited Series) #2**
- **THE OFFICIAL MARVEL INDEX TO THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #2** — Features everything you wanted to know about what happened in *Amazing Spider-Man #30-59!*
- **DOCTOR WHO #8**

MARVEL MAGAZINES

- **SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #111**
- **MARVEL AGE #25**
- **MARVEL FANFARE #20** — The Thing and The Hulk battle in "The Clash" Part Story and pencils by STARLIN. Inks by [illegible]

EPIC COMICS

- **EPIC ILLUSTRATED #29**
- **MOONSHADOW #1** — A comic like [illegible] before! See Hype Box.
- **VOID INDIGO #2**
- **GRIP THE WANDERER #3**
- **COYOTE #11**
- **SWORDS OF THE SWASHBUCKLERS #1** — The Swashbucklers have been polishing their swords, making sure that this will be the best epic ever! Don't miss it!

STAR COMICS

- **PLANET TERRY #2**
- **PETER PORKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-HAM #1** — Now it's time for the best use you demanded it! This is the Spider-Ham yeah! The Mysterious Island of Doctor Doyle!
- **WALLY THE WIZARD #2**
- **ROYAL ROY #1** — He's a prince of a boy! And he's a king now to [illegible] and very much a victim of Cashsaur! It must [illegible]
- **MUPPET BABIES #1** — Can you [illegible] and Miss Piggy and Muppet Baby [illegible] and more all [illegible]
- **GETALONG GANG #1** — The stars of Saturday Morning TV's all-new [illegible] their own Star Comic! Moby Moose, Zipper, Tail and Cutty Dog want you to join the Getalong Gang!

"Call me Age-Mail" OR...

A WHALE OF A LETTERS PAGE

Send your letters to **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE**, % Marvel Comics Group,
387 Park Avenue South, New York, New York, 10016

Welcome back, Marvelites! Hey, you know how we always change the letter column title every month and tell you who sent it in — making an instant celebrity out of some poor innocent comic book reader? Well, this month, *Janet Jackson* (our brand-new Designer) and *Andy Mushynsky* (stellar inker of *G.I. JOE*) thought up the title — and it was so bad we had to use it! What do *you* think?

(Ok, ok! Next month we'll go back to taking them from the pile of suggestions we get from *you!* But just once, we wanted to let the Bullpen shine!)

Dear Jim and Comapny,

I'm writing because I'm concerned about you using smaller type to cram more words on to every page. DON'T DO IT! Don't ruin the quality of this publication by reducing type size to squeeze more information and try to stay at a low price. Rather, expand your articles and features and you still won't lose customers at a higher price.

You know what I would enjoy seeing in **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE**? Perhaps a listing of birthdays of the whole Marvel gang. I enjoy reading histories and biographies. How about bringing back those yearly calendars of those Marvel Super Heroes? A Marvel calendar in **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE** would be an added treat. A pull-out that you could hang on the wall would be a significant reminder for the younger fans of the Marvel Comics line of titles.

Thanks!

Mad Mona
P.O. Box 9382
San Antonio

Great to hear from ya, *Mona!* But hey — even *The New York Times* waits until they see the play before they review it! In other words — don't get all hyper about our running the new point size before we've even started! As you can see by this issue, it's only one little point size smaller — and it's perfectly legible. Still friends?

Well, if you still aren't satisfied, *M.M.* — check out the back cover to this very ish! 'Cause starting this month, we're going to serialize a mighty Marvel calendar!

There! Who says we don't deliver?

Dear Marvel,

My dad is a foreign service officer here in Indonesia, and I'll tell you, comics are about the only contact we've got with the "outside world." Sounds like we're out in the boonies? Well, in effect, we are. Hey, I just finished **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE #21**, and it was great! From the looks of the art starting on page 10, **VOID INDIGO** ought to be a big success. The given circumstances behind the series sound interesting to say the least. **MOONSHADOW** sounds weird, because I've never read a comic whose essence is in Brooklyn! I'll be watching for 'em. for 'em.

One question, though. How do you pronounce **"Boronwë"** from **SISTERHOOD OF STEEL**? Another question — on page 7, is **Thor** mad? Another question — do I ask too many dumb questions? Oh, well!

John Warren
American Embassy Box 1
APO San Francisco 96356

No such thing as a dumb question, *John* — that's what we're here for. You pronounce *Boronwë* as "Buh-RON-way." And is *Thor* mad? Well, we'll put it this way — never mess with a thunder god!

Dear Marvel,

One of the things I look forward to every month on the **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE** cover is what strange predicament our lovable **Forbush-Man** finds himself in. Who draws that little corner box cartoon, anyway? My guess is that it's none other than the master, **Fred Hembeck**. Am I right?

Jeffrey Allen Wilson
4303 North Tripp Ave.
Chicago, IL 60641

Nope! It's the work of another master — our Assistant Art and Production Co-ordinator, *Ron Zalme*. In addition to his bullpen duties, Ron's a talented cartoonist in his own right — and you can recognize his work by his infamous signature, the initial "Z!" Ron also drew the now-classic series of ads for the OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE last year, featuring the Watcher. Now you know!

Dear Jim,

Where's **Ka-Zar**?

Paula Mangold
20073 M-86
Centreville, MI 49032

Well, if you caught the last issue of *KA-ZAR*, then you know he's in the Land of Cancelled Heroes. Thing is, nobody at Marvel stays there for long! You've already seen the premiere of the former direct-only title *MICRONAUTS*, and soon you'll be seeing the newly-revamped *MOON KNIGHT* #1. The, when the proper creative team is set and all is in readiness, a brand new title will be launched for the newsstand and direct sales audiences, starrring none other than the quixotic and courageous jungle lord known as *Ka-Zar!*

Dear **MARVEL AGE**rs,

I really liked the four-isue Limited

Series starring **Machine Man**. So I'm writing to the **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE** crew, because the title had no letters page. I liked the series so much that I think it would be a good idea to have a regular **MACHINE MAN** title. Make him a super hero sort of like **Iron Man** or **Captain America**. I hope you do consider this. Thank you for your time.

Rick Nicholson
Englewood, CO 80110

You're more than welcome, *Rick*, and so are the thousands upon thousands who dug the *MACHINE MAN Limited Series!* We took a big gamble with it — returning old *M.M.* to the future . . . and putting the unique talents of *Barry Windsor-Smith* to work on such an unusual mag! *Tom DeFalco*, *Herb Trimpe*, and *Barry* thank you one and all!

Dear Marvel,

In **FANTASTIC FOUR** #275, something occurred to me. Why would someone with emerald green skin tan? What purpose would it serve? I sure hope you can answer this for me!

Chris V. Stowitts
P.O. Box 39114
San Antonio, TX 78128

Why, with the life of a super heroine, constantly battling dangerous criminals, ol' *She-Hulk* enjoys a bit of time for relaxation . . . to be alone with her thoughts . . . to sit in the sun and daydream away the tensions of the day. Why else?

(Besides . . . we don't know about you, *Chris*, but we think a lady with slightly *darker* green skin is super sexy!)

Dear Marvel,

This letter isn't in praise of any certain book or character at Marvel. It's in praise of the Marvel Universe and the people behind it.

I had been away from comics for about twelve years ago so. When I was young, about nine years old, I used to read **THE FANTASTIC FOUR**, **THE SILVER SURFER**, and so on. I guess that after that I just "outgrew" them.

Then on January 9 I met a young man who reintroduced me to the wonderful world of comics. I started with **THE X-MEN**, **THE AVENGERS**, and **THE DEFENDERS**, and now I read almost all of your titles every month.

The more I read, the better you guys get. The best new title is **TRANSFORMERS!** Great book! Being from a small town in Oregon, it makes me feel at home. If you decide to name the town where the action takes place, Woodburn would fit right in — we are right off I-5, *and* we have a drive-in theatre. Look at any map — we have the perfect locale for the **TRANSFORMERS** series!

And I am glad it will be a series! It sells out here as soon as it hits the stands. I'm lucky just to find a copy. I like all of your books, mainly because the characters act like real people. They have loves and hates. They even sometimes fight amongst theselves.

All in all, great job, and it's nice to be back in the comics world again. By the way, that "young man" and I are getting married in April. And I know neither one of us will ever outgrow comics.

Jeannette London
and Steven Tallman
670 Brown Street
Woodburn, Oregon 97071

Ahhh, this is the kind of letter we love to get! To think that our crazy band of super characters could be responsible for a young man and a young woman falling in love and getting married! Wow! Isn't that great! Just make sure that if you decide to raise a family, your kids grow up on Marvel Comics — as if we had to tell ya!

Dear **Marvel Age People**,

I think you should do something about your competitors. They've been copying you. For instance, you made **Iron Man** black. Then along they came and made one of their major characters black. You produced **SECRET WARS**, and then along they came with a similar series. You did **THE HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE**, and soon they'll be coming out with a handbook to *their* universe. See what I mean? *Do* something about it!

Jeff Logan
3795 Clubland Dr.
Marietta, GA 30067

Why should we? After all, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery! Besides, there's one thing nobody can imitate — the Marvel magic!

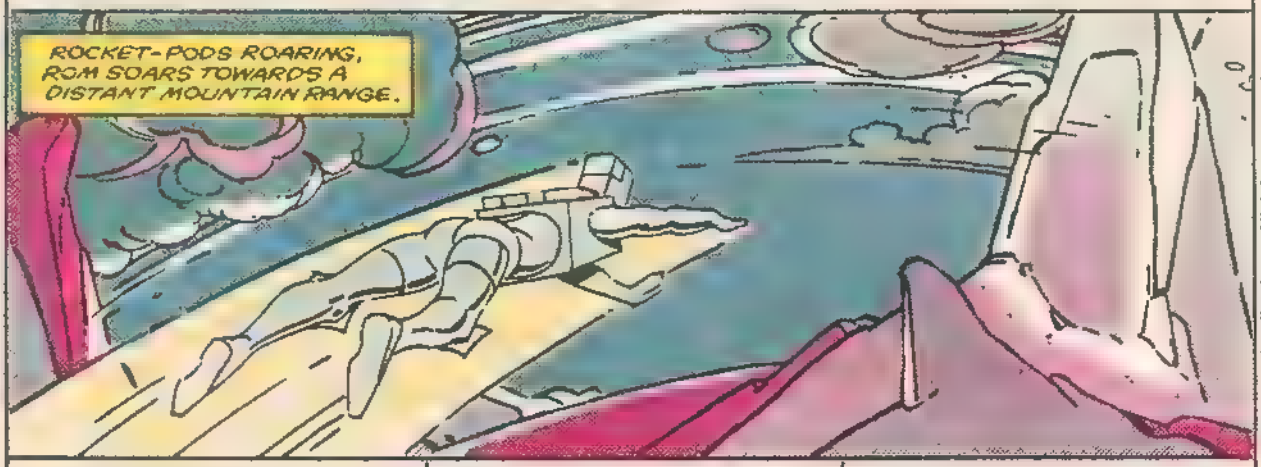
Dear **Jim** and Company,

Here is an idea for a maxi-series. Adapt the most popular trilogy in science fiction, **FOUNDATION**, by **Isaac Asimov**. That could be the toughest challenge of your life!

Dennis Gregoire
#305, 4540-1st Street
Laval, Quebec
CANADA H7W 256

Sheesh, *Dennis!* We're only human! We give you *SECRET WARS*, *DUNE*, *2010*, and our regular titles — and now you want *this!*

Although — who knows? It would



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be just like Marvel to hire four hundred new artists and writers and put them to work day and night without sleep for ten years straight just to work on a new project . . . !

Dear Marvel,

I am a Brazilian boy of about 15 years, and I would like to say that the success of your characters here in Brazil is immense, and each day brings more readers to Marvel. The favorites of the moment are **Spider-Man** and **the Incredible Hulk**. Here we get six comics every month and we also have trimestrial almanacs.

I feel a great fascination for Marvel heroes since I was a child. I have a great collection of Marvel heroes, and my favorite is **Spider-Man**.

Right now I would like you to publish my address for correspondence with American Marvel readers. Their letters must be written in English. To conclude, give my congratulations to everybody. Thank you.

Benedito Grieber Sopes Suzano
Trav. Marques De Herval, 93
Pindamonhangaba, Sao Paulo
BRAZIL 12400

We're always delighted to hear from an international fan, *Grieber* — many thanks for writing to us and letting us know how popular *Spidey* and the whole gang are in Brazil! We're certain that many of our readers will be writing to you soon. Take care and good luck!

Dear **Jim Salicrup**,

Love **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE**. Why? Well, in the past, I was never able to get my hands on copies of **FOOM**, Marvel's mid-seventies fan magazine. When you're a kid, you don't necessarily have the cash to spend on a magazine that costs $2.50 per copy. That's what I like about **M.A.** — it's inexpensive and any kid who's interested can go into a comics shop and find a copy. Ever since you went to Mando stock, it looks better than ever. The paper especially helps with the New Talent Department. Keep **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE** just the way it is.

Wow! **Steve Ditko** is back! I've got to be honest, **Jim**, I wasn't ever *too* interested in **ROM** in the past. Not because of the character, just because it didn't stand out to my eyes like most Marvels do. But now, I just can't miss an issue! The book is shaping up to be a classic. I'm sure the Bullpen agrees with me, and especially the cream of the crop of Marvel's inkers, seeing how they're lining up to work on **ROM**. Loved the **Tom Palmer**-inked issue, and I'm especially looking forward to the ones inked by **P. Craig Russell**. It's about time this guy did more work for Marvel's mainstream comics. By all means, give him some more stuff. Blackmail him if you have to, but have him do more!

To comment on **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE's** regular features . . . it's about time that the Top Ten returned! Of *course* **SECRET WARS #1** is on top! That's not any surprise to a loyal Marvelite like me. **Mr. Salicrup**, make sure that this feature is in every issue from now on. I also like the New Talent Department very much, and every single artist you've featured on it has been excellent. This might seem like an unusual request, but how about some samples from some budding scripters, like three people I know (mainly me, myself, and I). I'm also pleased that the letters "page" is actually three pages. The mag must receive a lot of correspondence for that to be so. And, of course, the Coming Attractions are great, too. Kind of makes one feel that one is at a movie theater, waiting for the trailers of "attractions" (what about **Elvis Costello**?) to come. Keep those surprises coming.

Finally, I just *had* to comment on this . . . I read in this issue's Coming Attractions that none other than **Jerry Ordway** is coming to Marvel and is going to be inking none other than **THE FANTASTIC FOUR** over **John Byrne**! Honestly, I do read some of your competition's mags (horrors!) and I considered **Mr. Ordway** the best they had. Long have I had the desire to have this gentleman draw such characters as **Thor, Wolverine**, and **The Thing**. Now I get my wish! Thank you! I can't wait! The merest thought of **Byrne** and **Ordway** together compells me to be "Shakin' All Over!' Far freakin' out!

Thanks for reading my captivating comments, **Jim**. And thanks for printing my letter to **Jim Shooter** about **SECRET WARS** in **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE** #20. I bought that issue just one week after my mother passed away, so to say it helped cheer me up would be an understatement. And not only that, but it helped get me a penpal in England, who saw the letter. Female, too. 'Nuff Said?

Evan M. Lanctot
45 Powers Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94110

Nuff said, *Evan*.

And so as we joyfully and tearfully part for another thirty days, we leave you once again with a message! Remeber — as long as there are Marvel Comics, all will be well! And there will *always* be Marvel Comics!

Bye now!

THE MARVEL AGE™ 1985 CALENDAR

JANUARY

JIM SALICRUP-*WRITER*
RON ZALME-*ARTIST*

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
NOT ONLY IS ™ MARVEL SUPER HEROES SECRET WARS ™ OVER, SO IS 1984!		HAPPY NEW YEAR! 1
6 HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BRUCE PATTERSON!	7 HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BOB WIACEK!	8
13	14 IN '85 WILL DR. STRANGE MEET...	15 ...WAL THE WI
20 AQUARIUS	21	22 I CA WAIT JULY
27 HAPPY BIRTHDAY, FRANK MILLER!	28 YESTERDAY WAS ALSO STEVE LEIALOHA'S BIRTHDAY, BUT THAT'S A SECRET! EHHH!	29

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AY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	2 HAPPY GROO YEAR!	3 DO I SMELL CHEESE DIP?	4	5 AM I AN AVENGER OR ONE OF THE FF TODAY??
8	9 "I'M A MUTANT...	10 "...SHE'S A MUTANT...	11 WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO BE A MUTANT, TOO?"	12
LY EARD?	16	17 IT'S THOR'S DAY.	18 GIVE MY REGARDS TO YANCY STREET!	19 DID YOU PAY YOUR BETA RAY BILL!
N'T TILL 4th!	23 SCENE FROM NEXT-TO-LAST GALACTUS STORY... BURP!	24 HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JOHN ROMITA,SR.!	25	26 HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BAL BUSCEMA!
29	30 DOES SASQUATCH SHED? OH!	31	...BUT MARVEL SUPER HEROES SECRET WARS II IS COMING!	

THE MARVEL AGE™ 1985 CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

JIM SALICRUP-*WRITER*
RON ZALME-*ARTIST*

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
EVER WONDER WHO DID *THE AVENGERS'*		
3 WHEN *BLACK BOLT* SPEAKS... ...EVERYONE LISTENS!	4	5 WILL THE *MAN* P
10	11 TOMORROW'S *LINCOLN'S* BIRTHDAY! HONEST!	12 HAPPY BIRTHD *JOE ALB*
17 THERE'S NO TRUTH TO THE RUMOR THAT SINGER *PETER ALLEN* IS FORMING THE *BI-COASTAL AVENGERS!*	18	19 PISCE
24		25 AVAILABLE FOR PARTIES WEDDINGS, AND BAR MITZVA

AY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	LAUNDRY?		1 THIS IS THE SHORT MONTH, EH?	2
	REAL IRON LEASE STAND UP? 6	7	8 LOOK OUT, LOCKJAW! I'M TOP DOG NOW!	9 HAPPY BIRTHDAY JO DUFFY!
ECO!	13 HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DANNY CRESPI!	14 VALENTINE'S DAY	15	16 IT'S HAPPY BIRTHDAY, RON WILSON TIME!
	20 WHATEVER HAPPENED TO NOVA?	21	22 WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY!	23 WATCH SPIDER-MAN AND HIS AMAZING FRIENDS ON TV!
HS...	27	28 HAPPY BIRTHDAY, NIFTY NANCY MURPHY!	I'M WAITING FOR LEAP YEAR!	
26				